GQ

APRIL/MAY 2025

The Eternal Reinvention of Savile Row

Daniel Lee's Burberry Is Hotting Up

A Very Modern Guide to 👫, 🥵, and 💔

BEN AFFLECK

A VISIT WITH THE BOSS

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GROOMING PAGES

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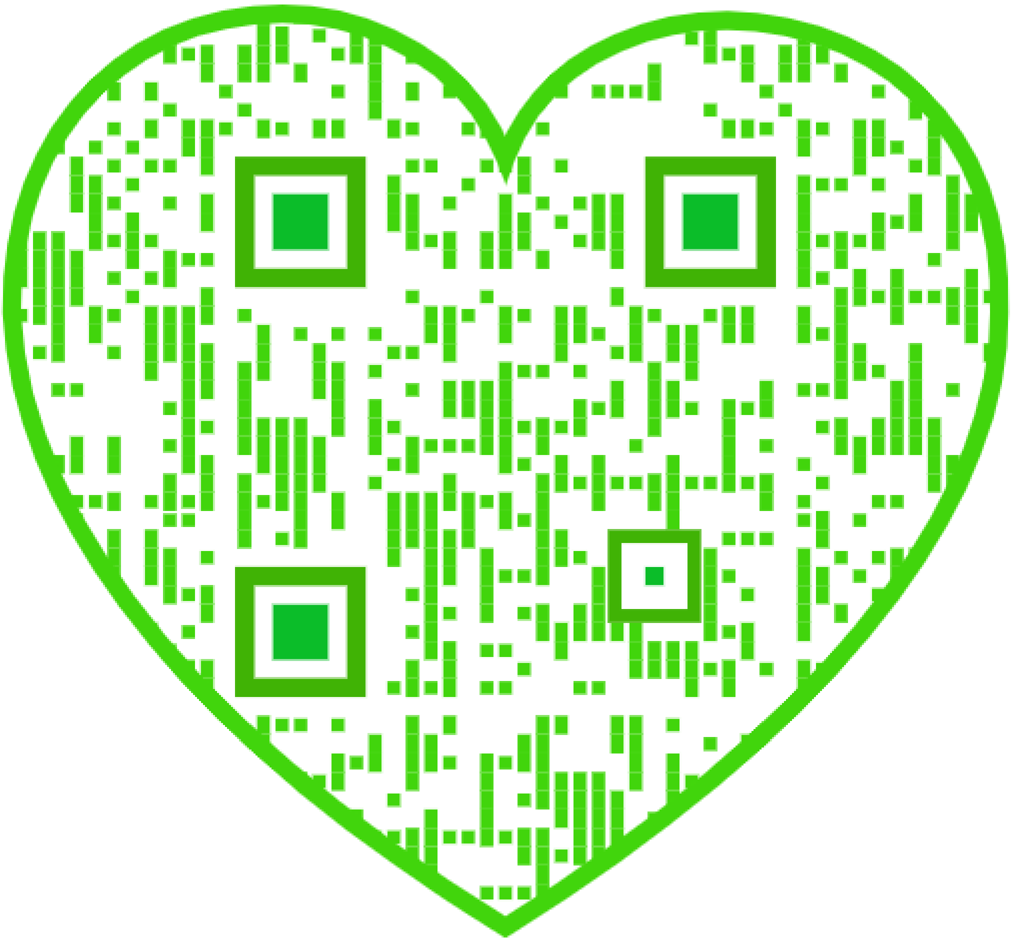

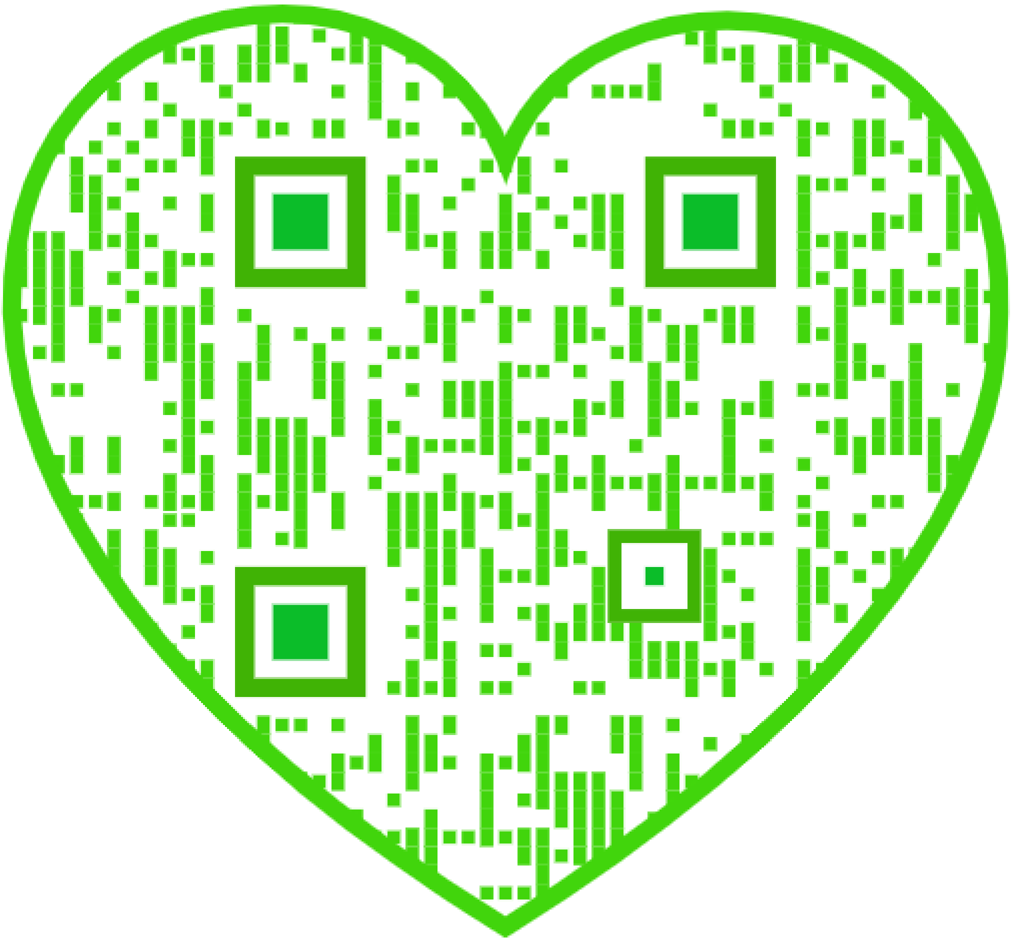

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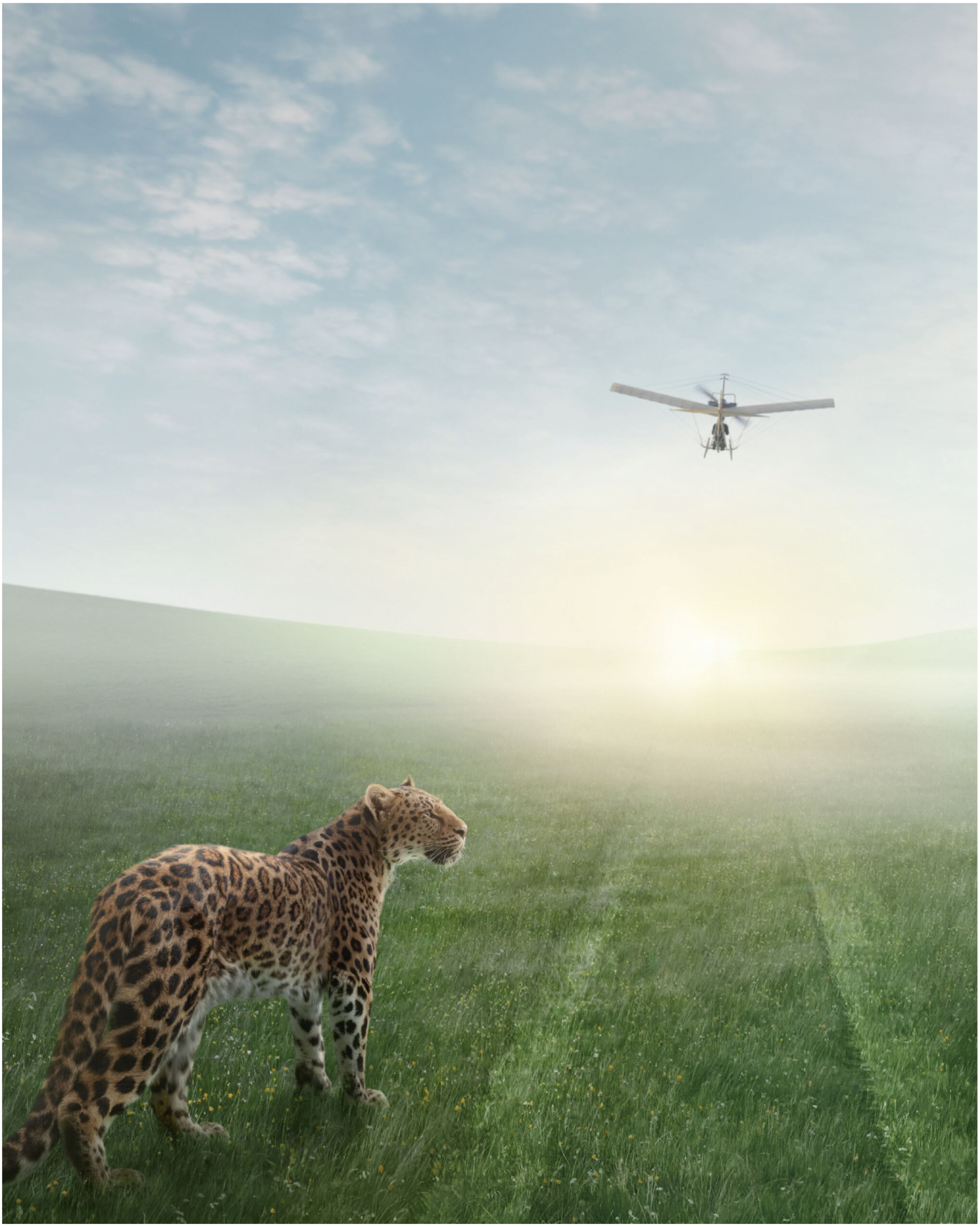

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As Manchester City's Official Style Fashionwear Partner, C.P. Company further strengthens its connection to football for the SS025 season. The campaign features Phil Foden in the Rafia Mille Jacket, Nathan Aké in the Taylon L Mixed Mille Jacket, and Jérémy Doku in the Knitted Nylon Jersey Explorer Jacket.

Mpg (l/100km): Not applicable. CO_2 emissions: 0 g/km. Electric energy consumption (combined): 18.5 to 21.7 kWh/100Km / 2.9 to 3.4 miles/kWh (N.Comp). Electric range: 334.3 to 387.1 miles. These figures were obtained after the battery had been fully charged. The i7 is a battery electric vehicle requiring mains electricity for charging. Figures shown are for comparability purposes. Only compare fuel consumption, CO_2 and electric range figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the starting charge of the battery, accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

THE i7

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April/May

GQ World

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On the Cover

Ben Affleck photographed by Gregory Harris. Styled by George Cortina. Jacket by **Anderson & Sheppard.** Shirt, bow tie and socks by **Charvet.** Trousers by **Drake's.** Pocket square by **Tom Ford.** Shoes by **John Lobb.** Glasses by **Jacques Marie Mage.** Vintage ring from **Foundwell.** Hair by Teddy Charles at Nevermind Agency. Skin by Jo Strettell using Sisley Paris. Tailoring by Susie & Hasmik Kourinian. Set design by Stefan Beckman at Exposure NY. Produced by Camp Productions.

G Q
H Q

Behind the Scenes With the People Who Make GQ

Contributor

MAHALIA CHANG
Style editor

For this April/May issue, our style editor Mahalia Chang spent time with the denizens of Savile Row – the trimmers, cutters and designers upholding the street's formidable reputation. "People think of Savile Row as being a bit snooty or inaccessible, but I found everyone who worked there very kind and generous with their time. When you love something a lot, you want to talk about it. The cutters that have been there for 40 or 50 years have amazing stories to tell."

Office Grails

←
HANNAH ENDERBY
Audience development and social media manager, British *GQ*

"Dressing up a Represent tracksuit is the easiest way to make your comfiest clothes office-proof."

→
YASMIN LAHOUASNIA
Content operations manager, *GQ* Middle East

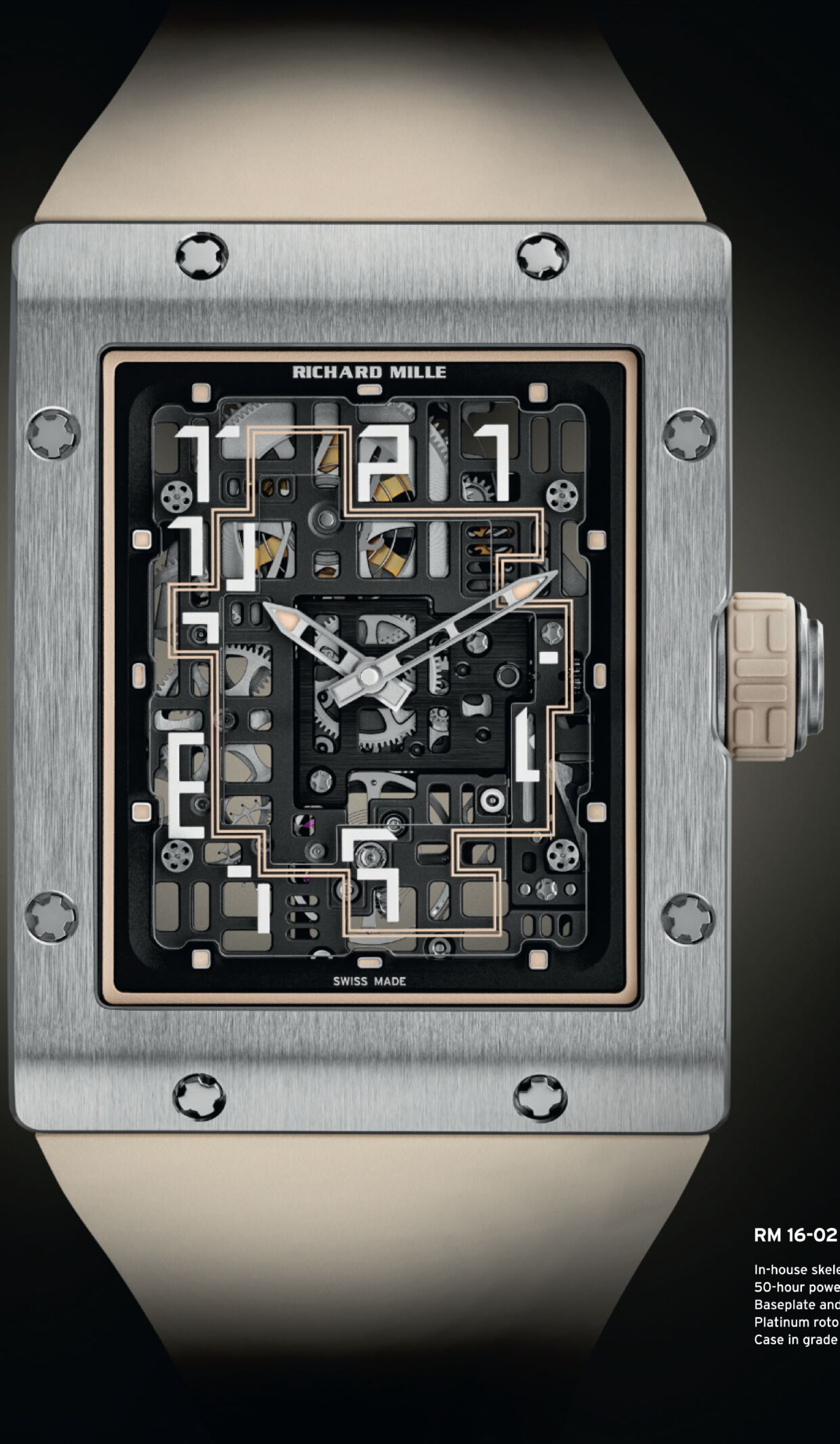
"When you have a meeting at 9am and a workout at 8pm."

←
CLAIRE HAZAN
Head of editorial content, *GQ* France

"Some red disco tights will wake up any look."

HANNAH ENDERBY AND YASMIN LAHOUASNIA, COURTESY OF THE SUBJECTS. CLAIRE HAZAN, MARC PIASECKI/WIREIMAGE/GETTY IMAGES.

RICHARD MILLE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April/May

For our story on Ben Affleck, see page 102.

Jacket by **Giorgio Armani**. Turtleneck by **Ralph Lauren Purple Label.** Trousers by **Anderson & Sheppard.** Pocket square by **Henry Poole & Co.** Shoes by **Christian Louboutin.** Socks by **Turnbull & Asser.** Glasses by **Jacques Marie Mage.**

STYLING, GEORGE CORTINA.

PHOTOGRAPH BY **GREGORY HARRIS**

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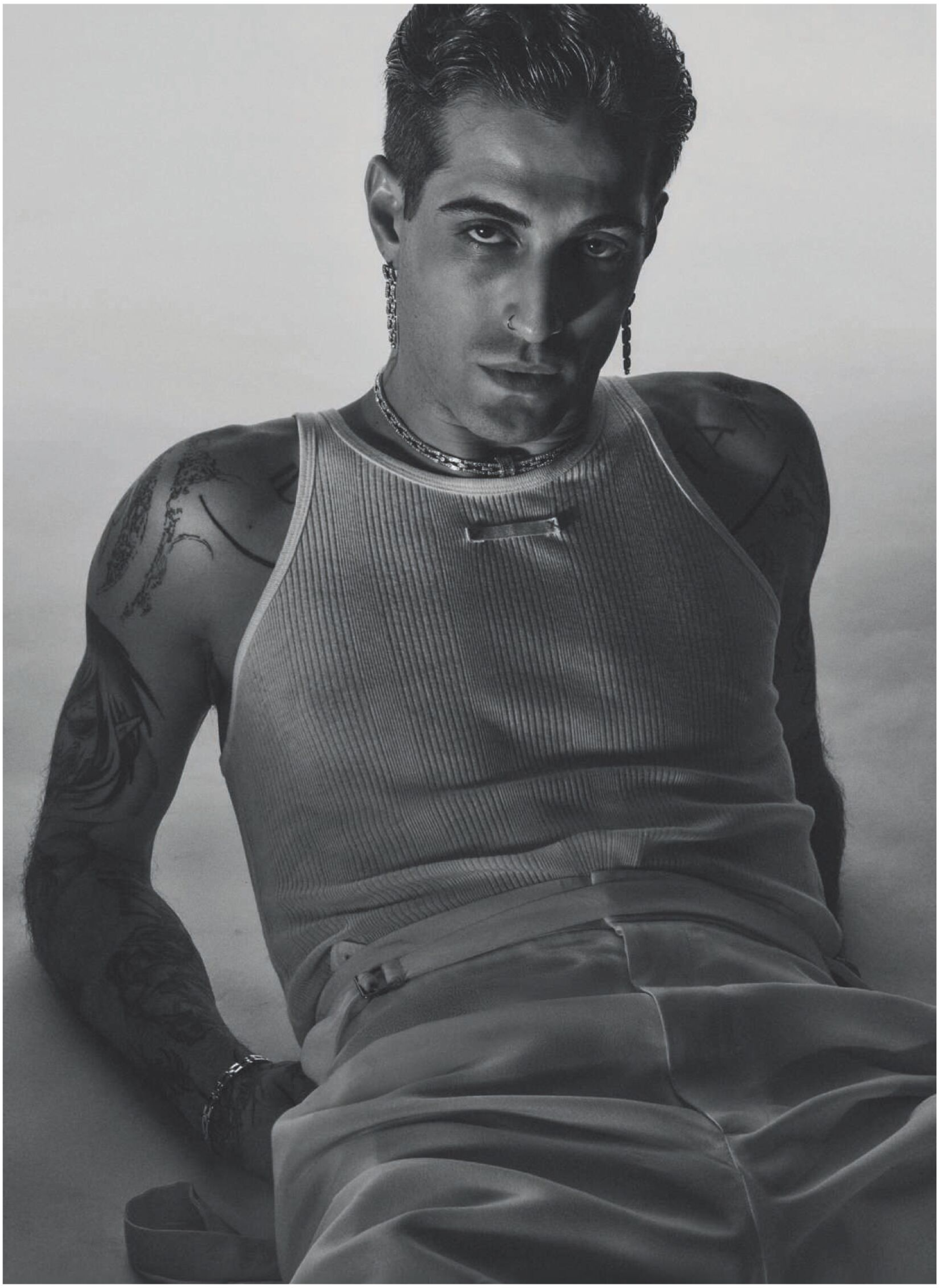
For our story on Alfie Nickerson, see page 41.

Jacket and trousers by **Dries Van Noten.** Trainers by **Asics.** Signet ring (right hand) by **Siadds.** Ring (left hand) by **Bleue Burnham.**

STYLING, ITUNU OKE.

PHOTOGRAPH BY **STEVE HARNACKE**

April/May



For our story on Damiano David, see page 152.

Vest by **Maison Margiela.** Trousers by **Ann Demeulemeester.** Earrings, necklace and bracelet by **Bvlgari.** Nose ring, his own.

STYLING, KATIE GRAND.

PHOTOGRAPH BY **DAN JACKSON**

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TUDOR
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28
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What is it that drives someone to greatness? To take on the unknown, venture into the unseen, and dare all? This is the spirit that gave birth to TUDOR, a spirit carried forward by every individual who wears this watch. This is the spirit that drives **Inter Miami CF**. On their wrists is the TUDOR Black Bay Chrono, a 41mm-diameter stainless steel chronograph boldly blending TUDOR's aquatic and motorsport heritage with the team's daring colours. Some are born to follow. Others are born to dare.

BORN TO DARE

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A Paean to Taking the L

ONCE UPON A TIME, in the dark ages before every celebrity memoir had a trauma chapter, I hit a bout of what I eventually learned was clinical depression. It crawled onto my back and hung from my shoulders like a rucksack full of dumbbells.

And I resisted it. I resisted it. I resisted it. Glorious denial. But piece by piece, day by day, I found myself unwilling to do... anything. There were stretches of time – weeks, maybe – where getting into the shower felt like lifting a car, brushing my teeth like scaling a mountain. Some days, I'd do nothing until 4pm.

By the time I saw a therapist, I was far gone. In my first session, I sat opposite her with my arms crossed. I avoided eye contact.

"This is so embarrassing," I said.

"Why?" she asked.

And with that, we were off to the races.

I learned a lot. The most humbling lesson: I could be spectacularly, staggeringly wrong. I wanted to *not have* depression more than I wanted to feel good again. That distinction was crucial. I was clinging to an idea of myself that didn't involve struggling, instead of just dealing with what was in front of me. If I'd taken the L sooner – with grace, with dignity – life would have been better a whole lot faster.

In basketball (forgive me, average British reader), most teams have what's called a volume shooter. This is the guy taking the most shots – 20, maybe 25, a game. The very best – your Currys, your LeBrons, your Durants – hit about 50 per cent of them. Missing half the time isn't failure. It's maths. Not even the most preternaturally gifted and hardest-working players in the history of the sport have avoided missing 50 per cent of their shots. I love that.

The same applies to… everything else. Talking to a lot of people makes you a volume shooter. Trying new things makes you a volume shooter. Taking risks, speaking up in meetings, making art, making decisions – every single thing you do, if you do it enough, will mean embracing plenty of losses. And yet, we resist the L. Playing not to lose is a deeply unsexy thing.

Which brings to mind another modern fallacy: the industrialisation of perfection. It was once the province of the aristocracy and Hollywood royalty to look super hot. Now, with a reasonable chunk of money, you can Ozempic, veneer, and two-week-Turkish-holiday your way to a lean, pearly-white-and-uniformly straight, reasonably thick-haired self. The problem, of course, is that once everyone can have something, it ain't special. One day soon, we will have a silly, algorithmically agreed-upon baseline of human hotness, which will in fact render hotness meaningless.

Truth is, nothing worth winning comes without the risk of losing: not in creativity, not in love, not in investing, not in peace – not in anything.

My wish for you and for me is to embrace the Ls, so that the Ws ring all the more sweetly. And, ideally, to take them with grace. I suspect that is what separates the successful from the interesting.

Adam Baidawi

DEPUTY GLOBAL EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

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25 Menswear Picks for a Beautiful, Bountiful Spring

Forget bouldering and crowded run clubs – gardening has emerged as the chillest spring pursuit. Once you've locked in the allotment, the menswear harvest is next – and flower-grower Alfie Nickerson plots the path .

By MAHALIA CHANG

BOTANIC BELTER
A fancy floral coat can take you from the farmers' market to the beer garden without straying into costume territory. Versace demonstrates.

Coat, price upon request, by **Versace.** Top, £25, by **Adidas** from **Rokit Vintage.** Jeans, £100, by **Levi's.** Signet ring, £297, by **Siadds.** Ring, £450, by **Bleue Burnham.** Shoes, stylist's own.

PLUS
3 high-impact trends to reap

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **STEVE HARNACKE**
STYLED BY **ITUNU OKE**

MAKE-UP, JINNY KIM USING OMOROVICZA. HAIR, KACHI KATSUYA.

ALFIE NICKERSON IS GROWING HIS OWN WAY

→ Life's a lot of fun when you own a flower farm. Alfie Nickerson, part-time model and the green thumb behind biodynamic farm Burnt Fen Flowers, is making it creative too. For the farm's 15,000 Instagram followers, Nickerson stages elaborate floral sets – a sailboat filled with blooms; a pool table of ferns with dahlia billiard balls; a bed of tulips planted in a phallic configuration. In every shot, there's Nickerson with a hand-rolled cigarette and a mud-flecked tee: a living symbol of the dirt and endeavour that goes into such works of beauty. The gig has landed him collabs with the likes of Loewe, and also enshrined him as part of the new school of growers, a cooler and more sustainability-minded generation blossoming in Britain.

"I'm obsessed with being outside," says Nickerson. "I'm surrounded by flowers constantly in the summer. There's a few moments where the sun is coming up, and there's wildlife everywhere. The whole place is packed. You think, This is amazing."

Shirt, £860, and trousers, £380, by **Moschino.** Shoes, £195, by **Grenson.** Necklace, price upon request, by **Hatton Labs.**

GQ World Drops

Budding Scarf

Silk scarf, £430, by **Gucci.**

Sweetpea Piaget

Watch, £19,900, by **Piaget.**

→ Sometimes it's necessary to flex in the community garden. And once you've outshone Bernard from the next plot, the tool slots can hold six beers for a punchy picnic.

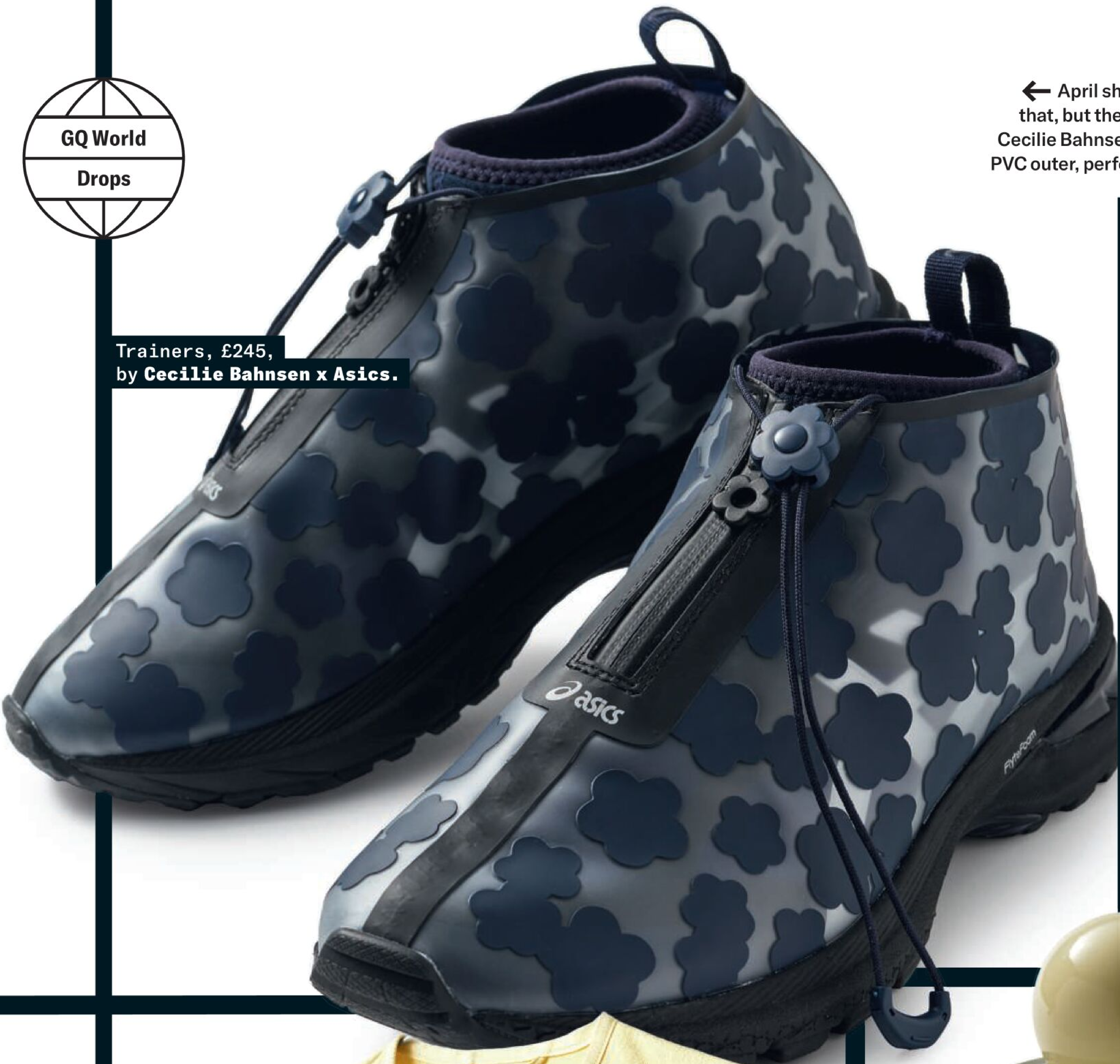
Tricked-Out Toolbag

Toolbag, £945, by **Armani x Casa Rovo.**

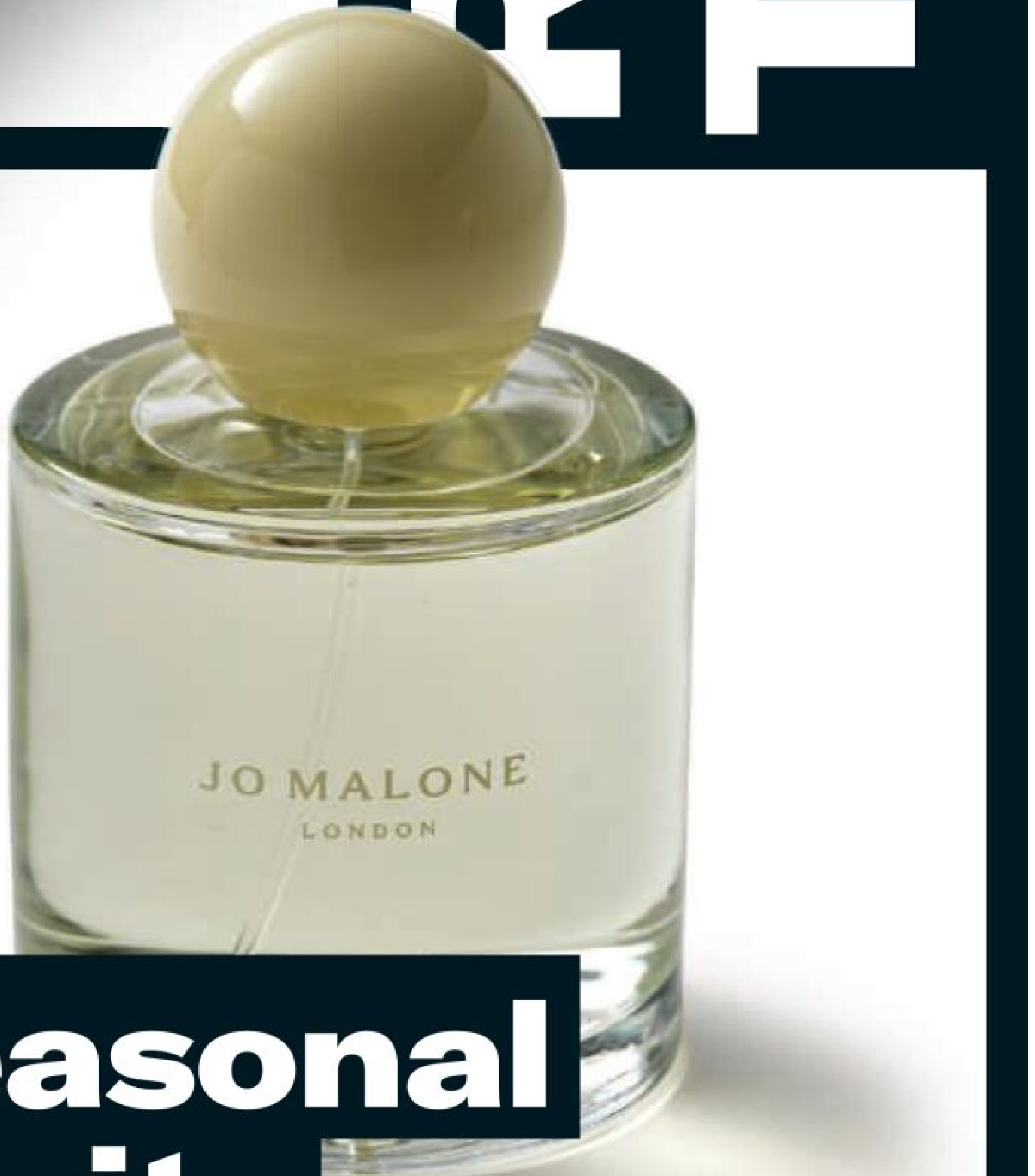
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **MITCH PAYNE**

Rainy-Day Trainers

← April showers bring May flowers and all that, but they still get your shoes wet. These Cecilie Bahnsen x Asics trainers have a cutesy PVC outer, perfect for keeping you dry (and fly).

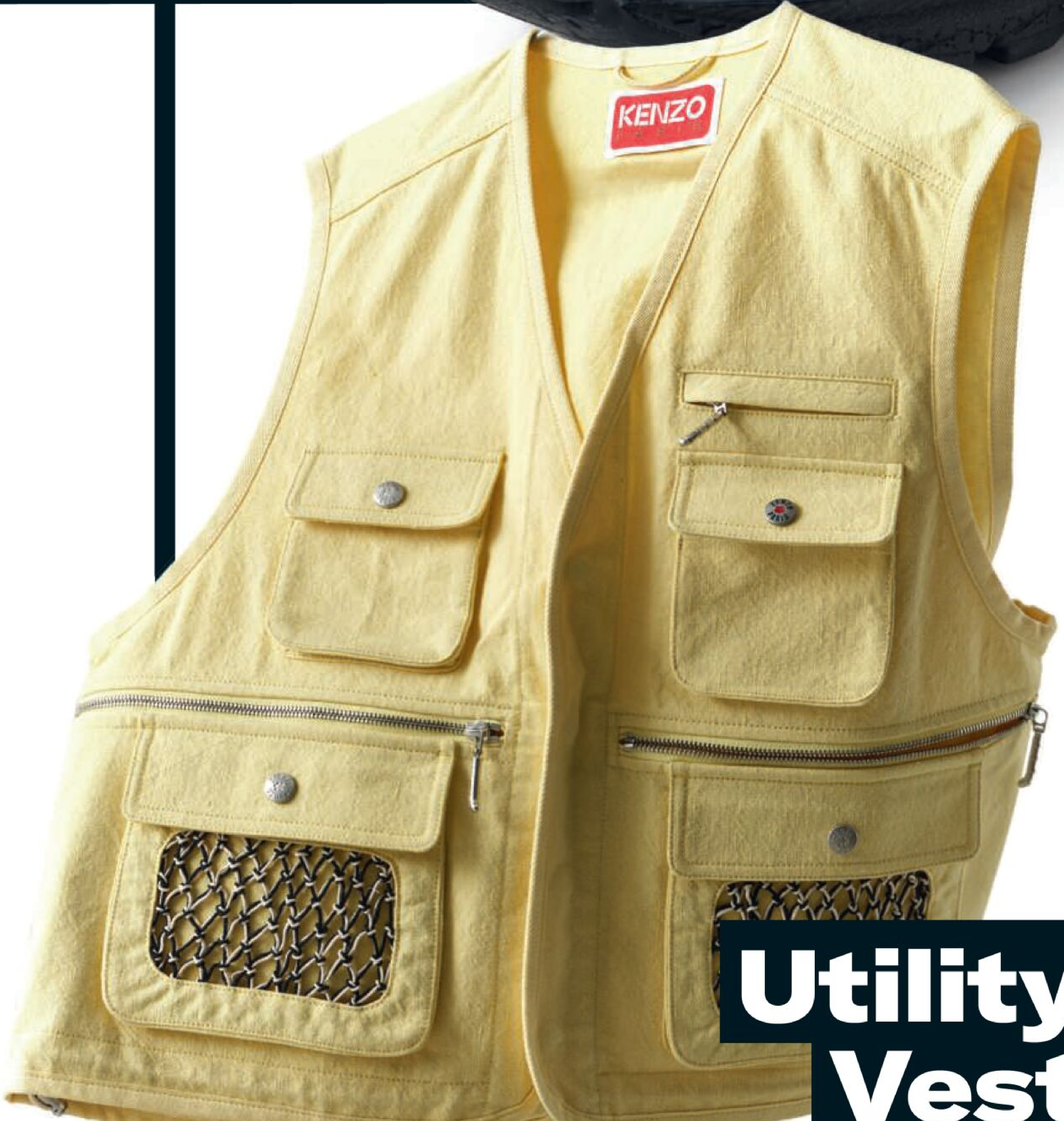


Trainers, £245, by **Cecilie Bahnsen x Asics.**



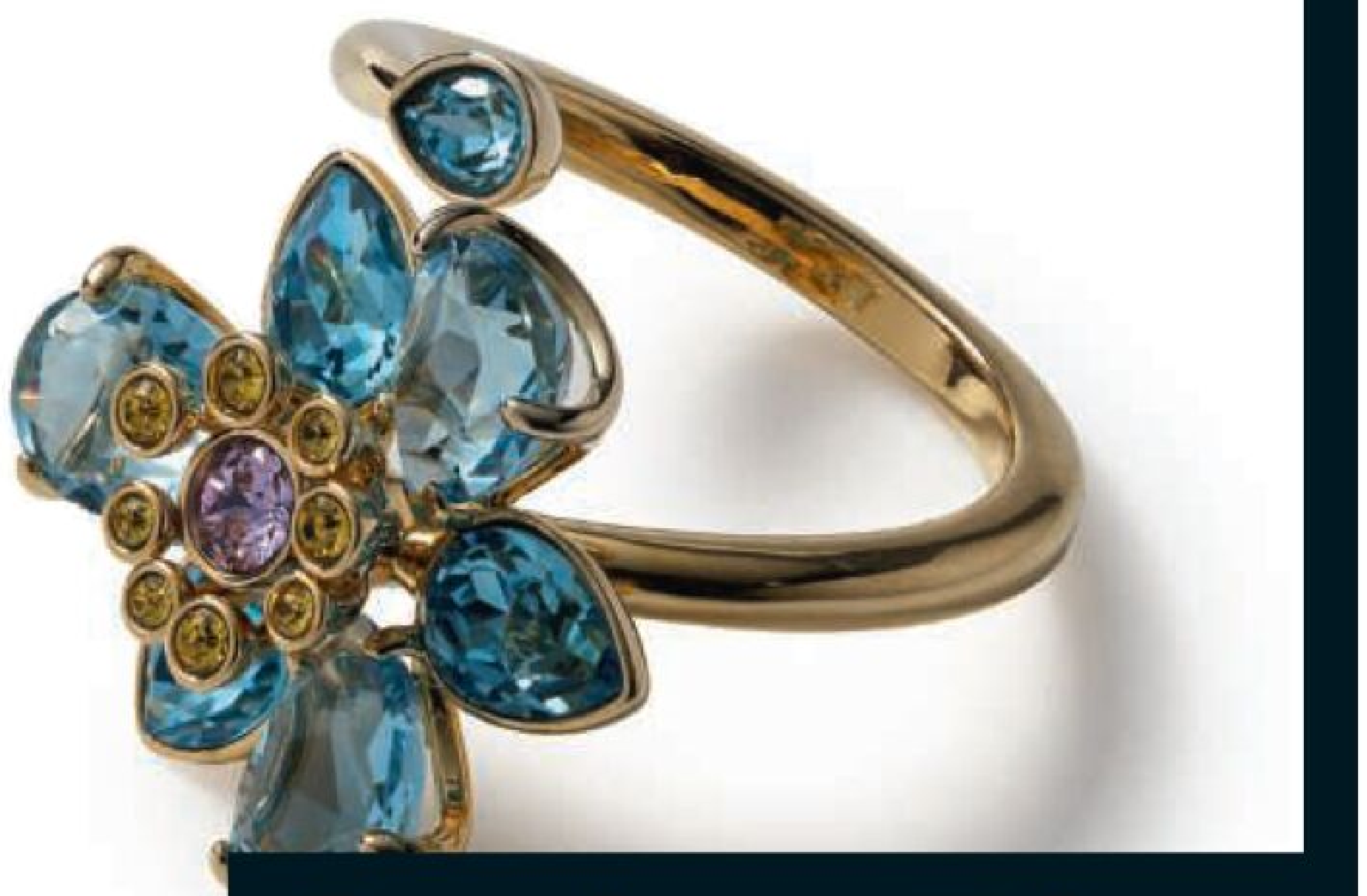
Seasonal Spritz

Frangipani Flower Cologne, £124, by **Jo Malone London.**



Utility Vest

Vest, £550, by **Kenzo.**

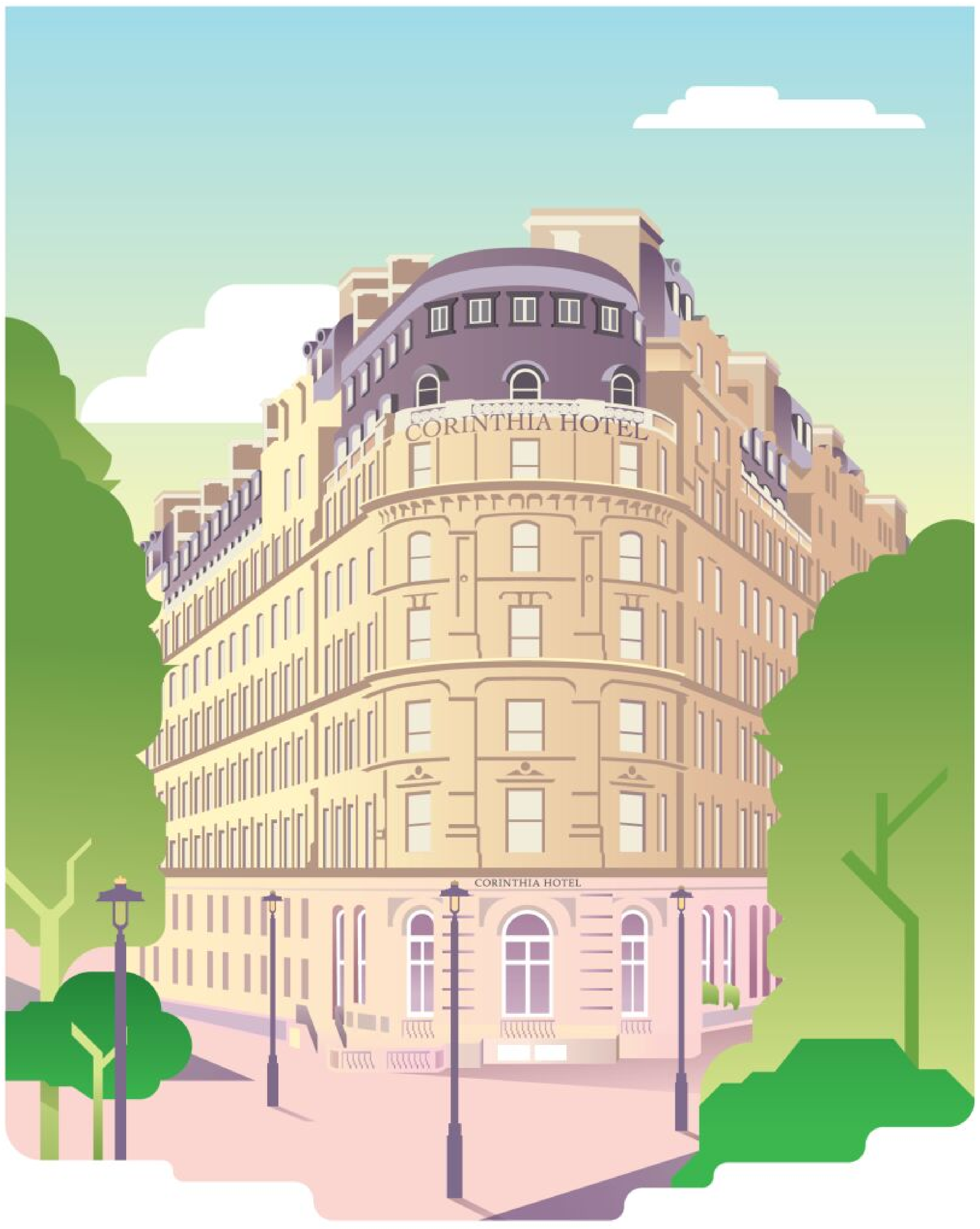


Spring Ring

Ring, £149, by **Swarovski.**

Laurent-Perrier

Cuvée Rosé, chosen by the best.


CORINTHIA HOTEL
CORINTHIA HOTEL

Kerridge's Bar & Grill
Corinthia London

CORINTHIA HOTEL
Laurent-Perrier
LP
CUVÉE ROSÉ
CHAMPAGNE
Laurent-Perrier
MAISON FONDÉE
1812
BRUT

CHAMPAGNE
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Cuvée Rosé is crafted from the best Pinot Noir berries,
slowly macerated after the harvest before aging
for a minimum of five years in our cellars.

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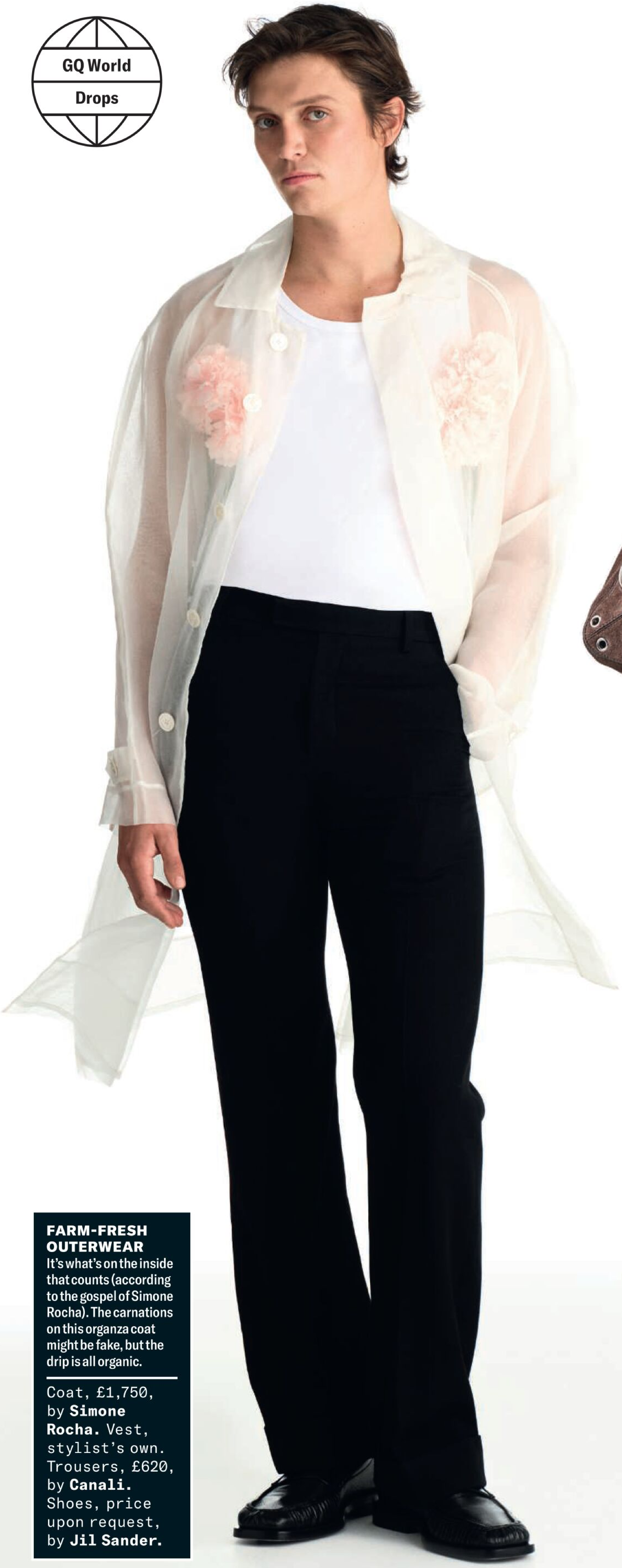
GQ World
Drops



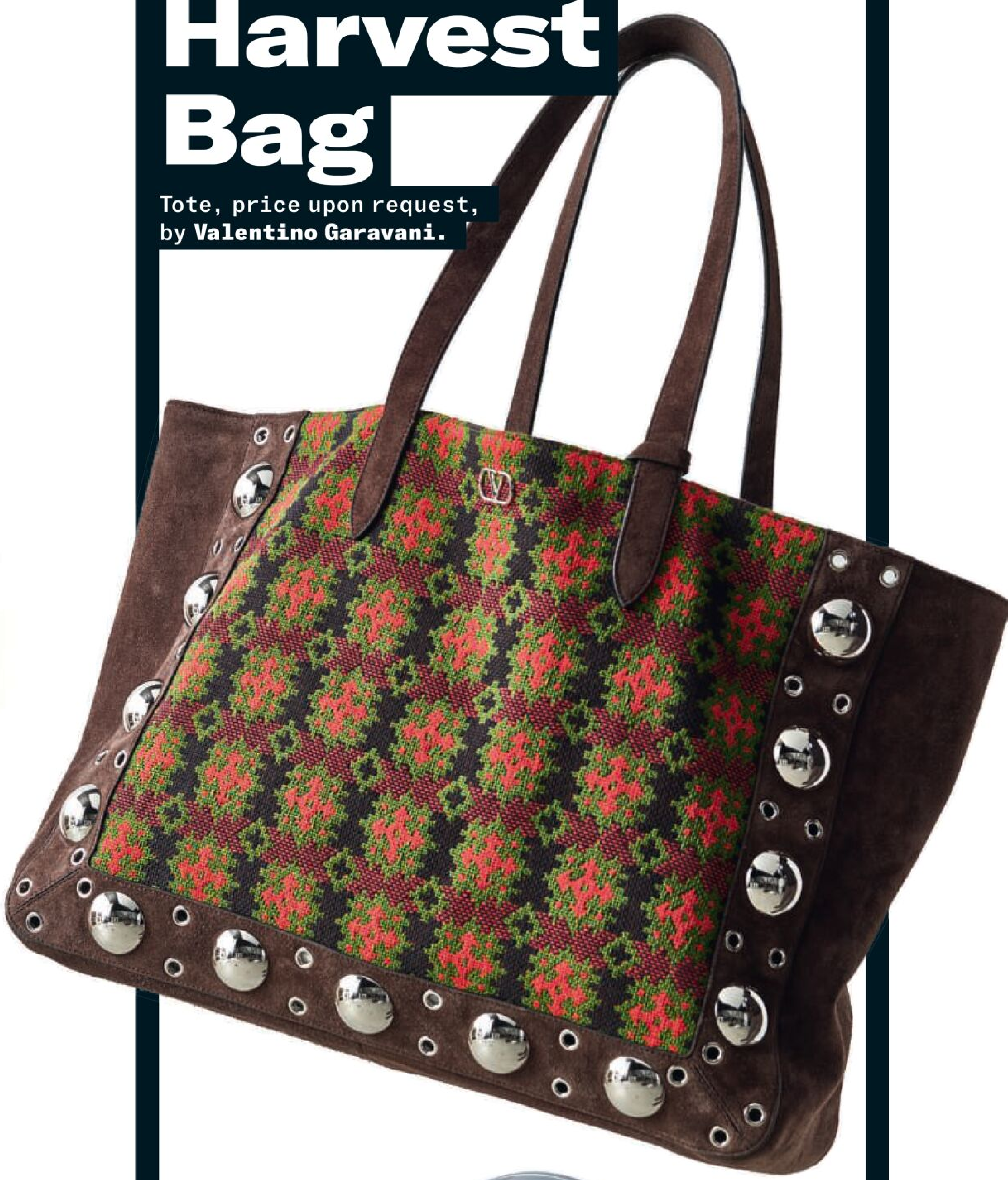
FARM-FRESH OUTERWEAR

It's what's on the inside that counts (according to the gospel of Simone Rocha). The carnations on this organza coat might be fake, but the drip is all organic.

Coat, £1,750, by **Simone Rocha.** Vest, stylist's own. Trousers, £620, by **Canali.** Shoes, price upon request, by **Jil Sander.**

Harvest Bag

Tote, price upon request, by **Valentino Garavani.**



Sweeter Scent

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FROM FATHER TO SON SI
100 ML

Original Vétiver Eau de Parfum, £265, by **Creed.**

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The Ritz London

Laurent-Perrier

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CHAMPAGNE
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CHARLES TYRWHITT
JERMYN STREET LONDON
LINEN COLLECTION
CHARLESTYRWHITT.COM

SOFT STREETWEAR
Don't lean into florals; dive straight in. Cult London label Palace provides the necessary tools in the form of a poppy-print sprinter jacket.

Jacket, price upon request, by **Palace Skateboards.**

LUCKY CAT
BY GORDON RAMSAY

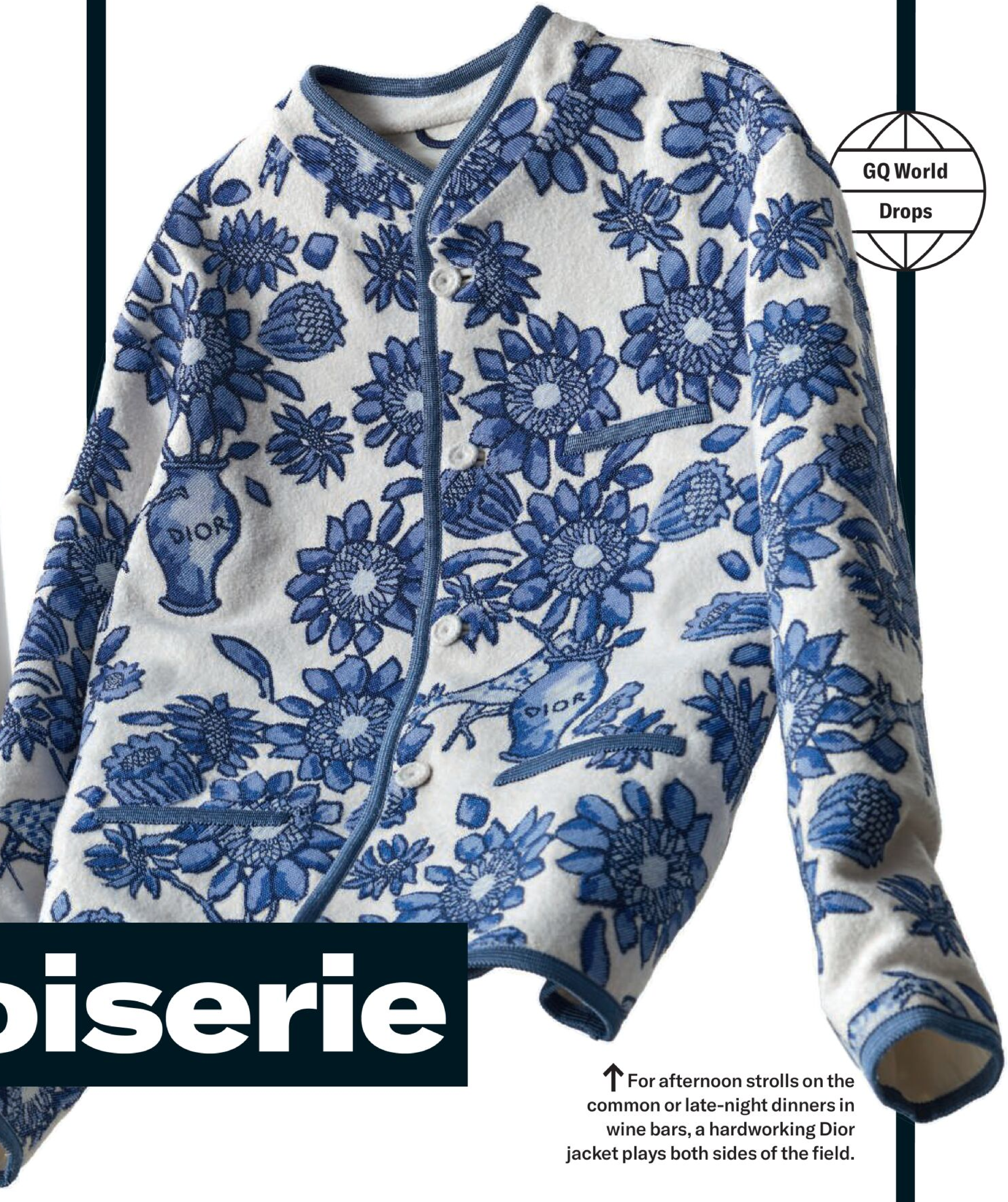
A VIEW
TO DINE FOR

LONDON'S HIGHEST
RESTAURANT & BAR

22 BISHOPSGATE
gordonramsayrestaurants.com

Bouquet Vase

Vase, £109,
by **Georg Jensen.**



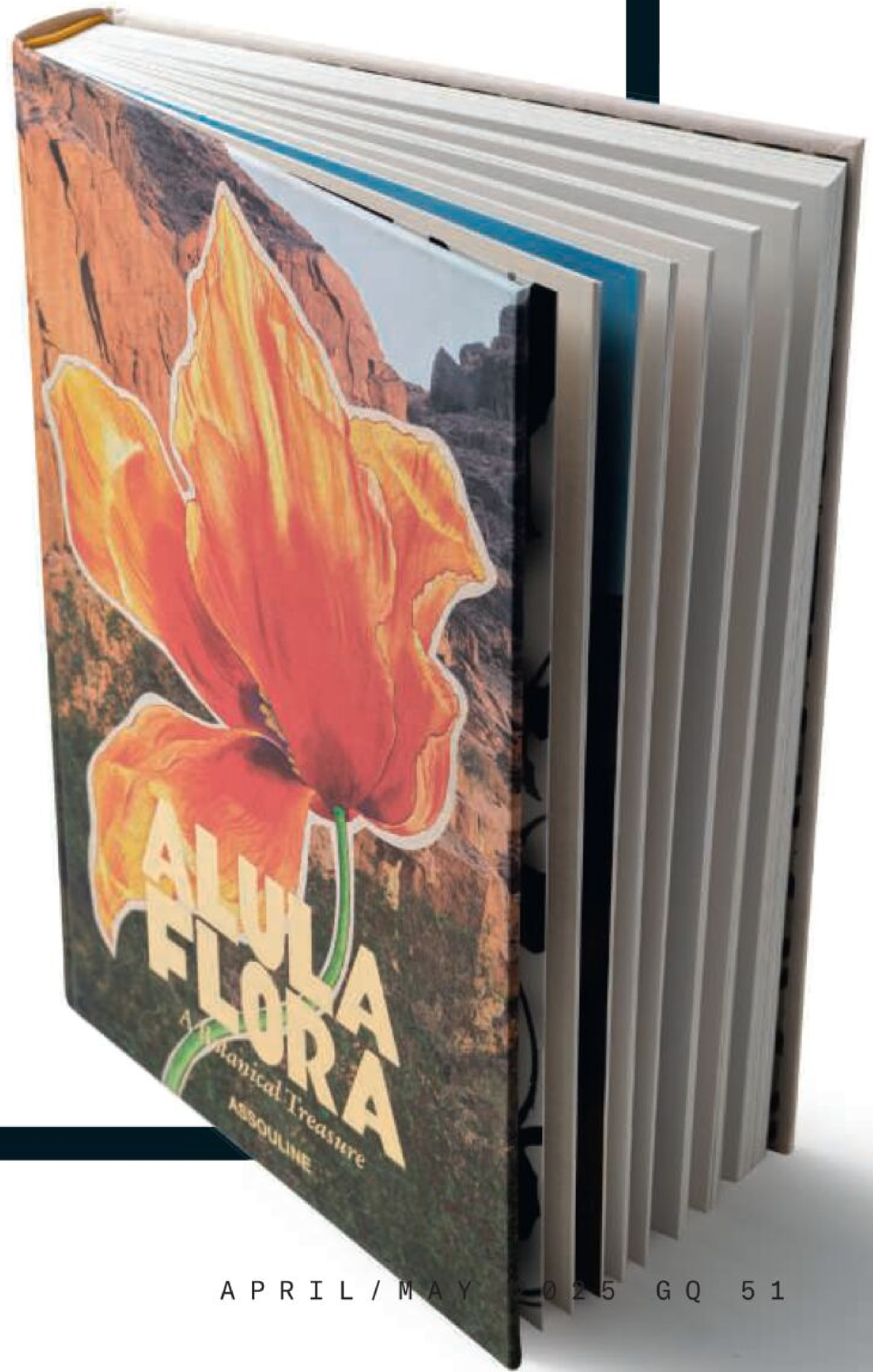
Jacket, price upon
request, by **Dior Men.**

Chinoiserie Coat

↑ For afternoon strolls on the common or late-night dinners in wine bars, a hardworking Dior jacket plays both sides of the field.

Bloom Bible

AlUla Flora book, £100,
by **Assouline.**


ALULA
FLORA
A Botanical Treasure
ASSOULINE

Luxury Lid

Bucket hat, £370,
by **Hermès.**

EST
1847
WILDSMITH
LONDON
ENGLAND
1847
"You are either in your bed or in your shoes,
so it pays to invest in both."
John Wildsmith
www.wildsmith.com

3D DRIP
Not everything has to be about loud prints. Add a textural touch to fits by picking three-dimensional embellishments: lettering, accents or just a really stunty jewelled brooch.

Coat, £850, by **Burberry** from **Rokit Vintage.** Top, £195, by **Geordie Campbell.** Shorts, £600, by **Aknvas.** Brooch, £950, by **Bleue Burnham.**

GQ World

Drops

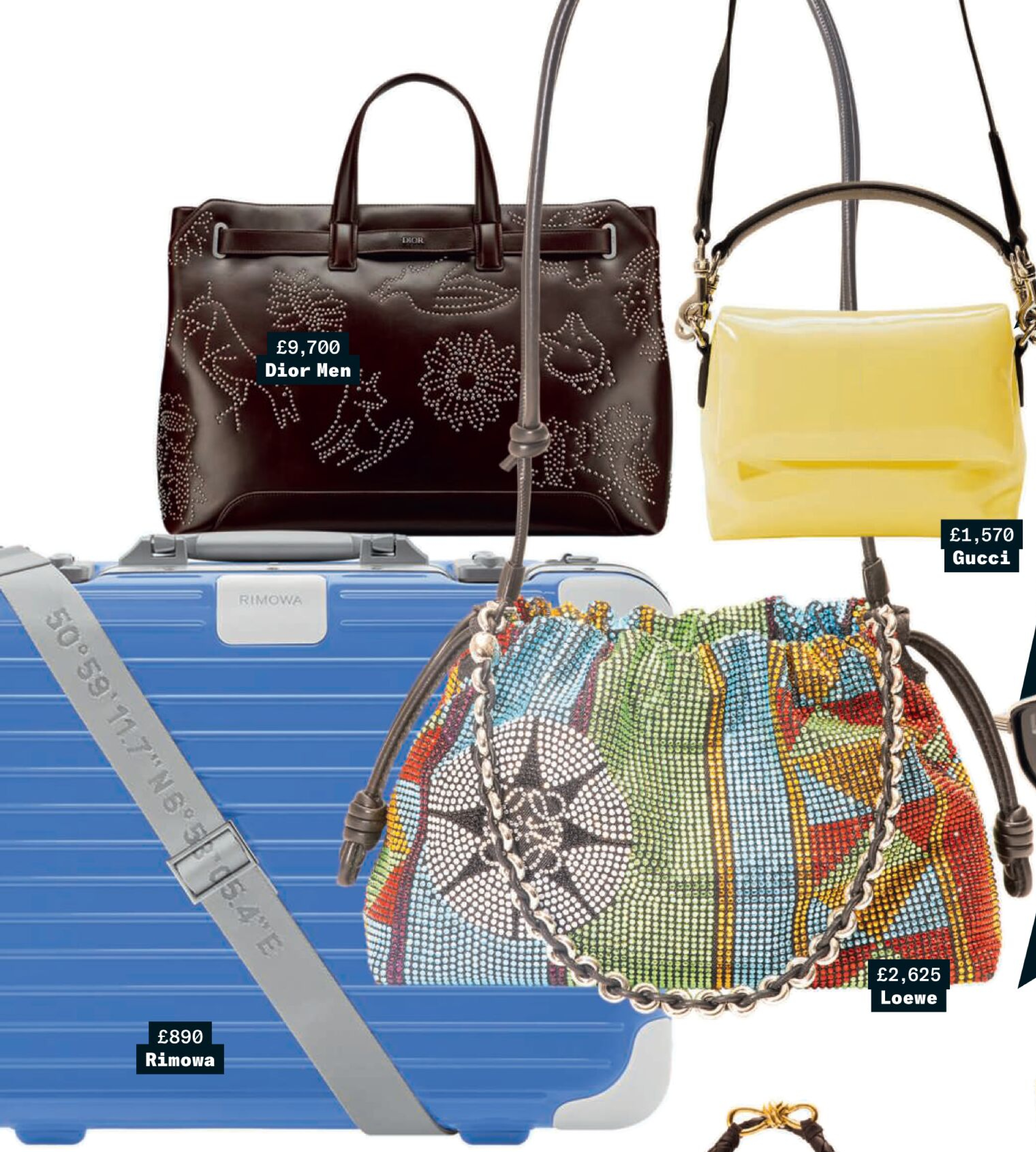
Big-Ticket Bags

Louis Vuitton has turned up the dial on its venerable bags, reimagining the classic briefcase in translucent red acrylic (above, £19,700) colour-splashing the tubular Speedy (far left, £7,100), and reviving the legendary collaboration with Takashi Murakami (below, £3,150).

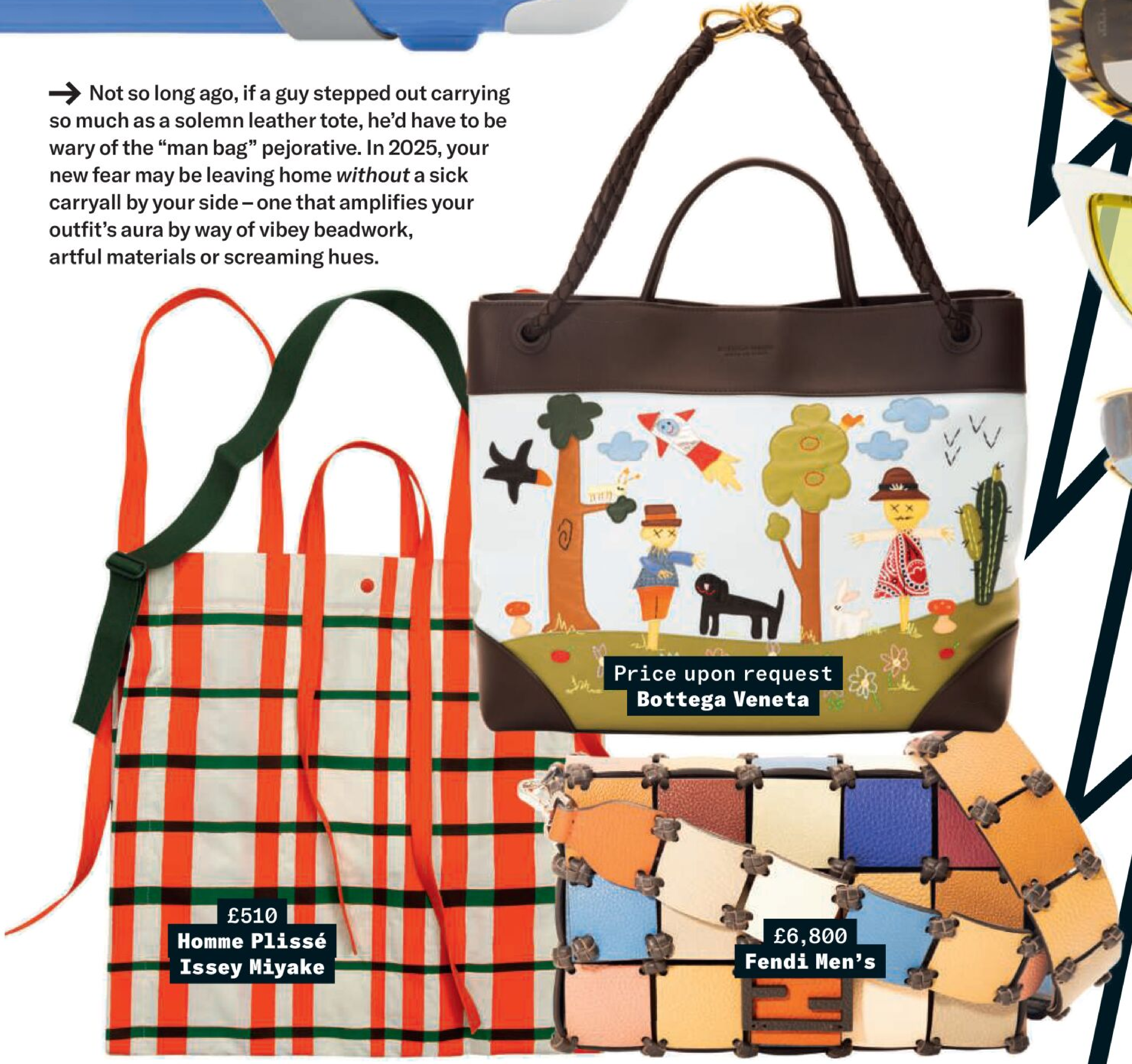
PROP STYLING: SUZY ZIETZMANN.

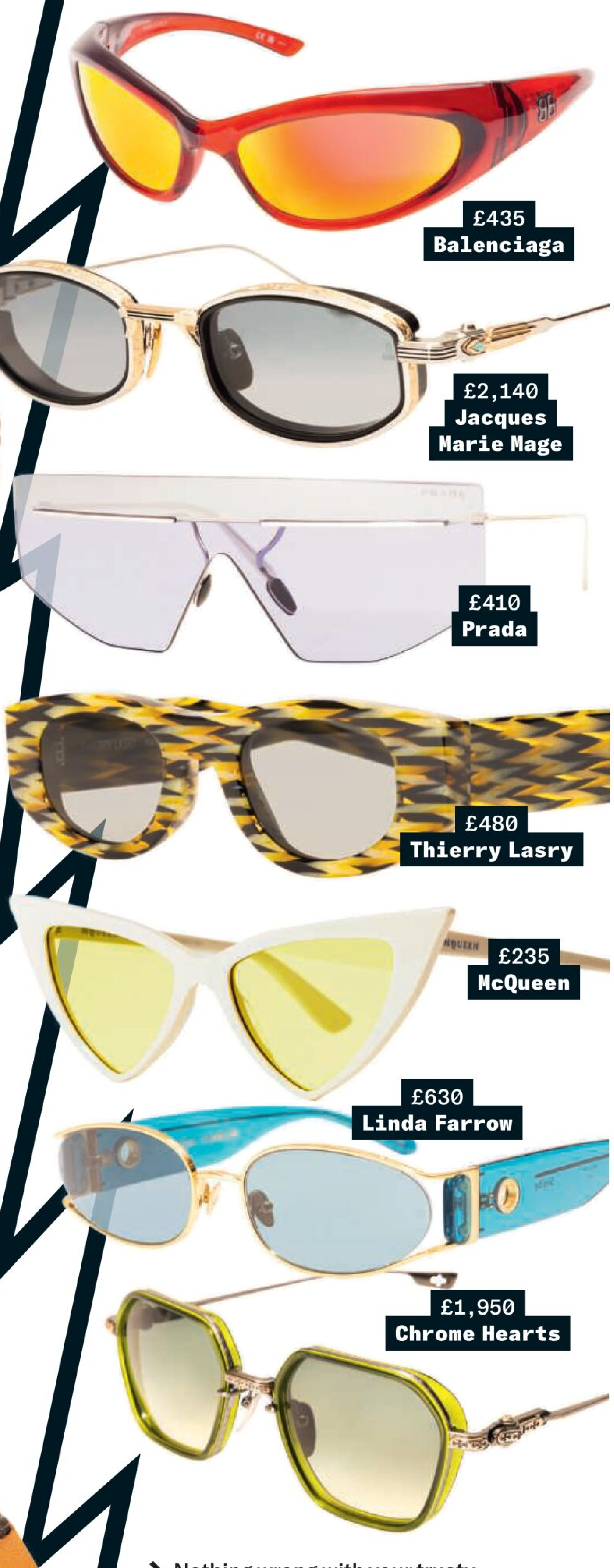
WORDS BY **YANG-YI GOH**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **COREY OLSEN**

A-List Shades


£9,700
Dior Men
£1,570
Gucci
£2,625
Loewe
£890
Rimowa
RIMOWA
50°59'11.7"N6°58'05.4"E

Not so long ago, if a guy stepped out carrying so much as a solemn leather tote, he'd have to be wary of the "man bag" pejorative. In 2025, your new fear may be leaving home *without* a sick carryall by your side – one that amplifies your outfit's aura by way of vibey beadwork, artful materials or screaming hues.


Price upon request
Bottega Veneta
£510
Homme Plissé Issey Miyake
£6,800
Fendi Men's


£435
Balenciaga
£2,140
Jacques Marie Mage
£410
Prada
£480
Thierry Lasry
£235
McQueen
£630
Linda Farrow
£1,950
Chrome Hearts

Nothing wrong with your trusty tortoiseshell Wayfarers, of course. It's just that it's never felt so right to embrace bigger, brasher frames with a whole lot more juice. Weirdo shapes! Gaudy gold rims! Gradient lenses! If it looks like something Bowie would've worn in 1973, it's what you want on your temples this summer.

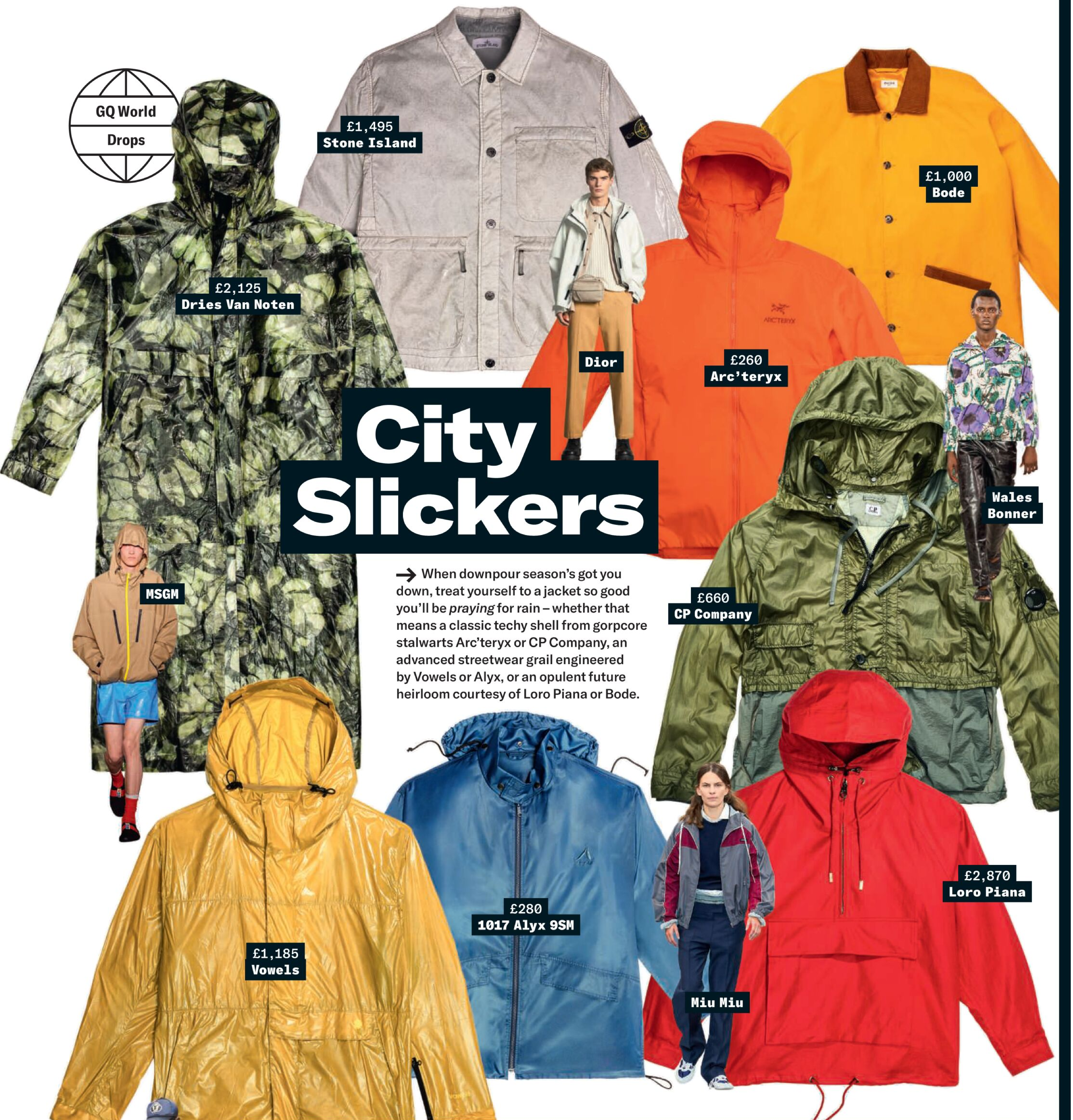
PROP STYLING, FITZ FITZGERALD AT MARK EDWARD INC. DIOR AND RIMOWA, COURTESY OF THE BRANDS.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **BOWEN FERNIE**

GQ World Drops

City Slickers

→ When downpour season's got you down, treat yourself to a jacket so good you'll be *praying* for rain – whether that means a classic techy shell from gorpcore stalwarts Arc'teryx or CP Company, an advanced streetwear grail engineered by Vowels or Alyx, or an opulent future heirloom courtesy of Loro Piana or Bode.


£2,125
Dries Van Noten
£1,495
Stone Island
Dior
£260
Arc'teryx
£1,000
Bode
Wales Bonner
£660
CP Company
MSGM
£1,185
Vowels
£280
1017 Alyx 9SM
Miu Miu
£2,870
Loro Piana

Louis Vuitton

ONE GOOD BUY
HOKA HOPARA TRAINERS

A wardrobe upgrade hand-selected by our expert GQ *Recommends team, with major "add to cart" appeal.*

Your average explorer-core sneakers, these Hoka Hopara trainers are not. A balancing act of pragmatism and modernity, this style almost mimics good ol'-fashioned dad sandals with its use of mesh and cut-outs. That said, if you do actually want to take this pair hiking, you'll find the water-repellent construction and toggle laces a banging touch. Just make sure you've got a thick sock on... that's a whole lot of mesh to contend with. —HEIDI QUILL

For more elite-level shopping intel sourced directly from the *GQ* brain trust, **scan the code to subscribe to the Recommends newsletter.**

RUNWAY PHOTOGRAPHS, CP COMPANY, COURTESY OF THE BRANDS.

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NEW YORK
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For huge fits, deep celebrity interviews, and breaking news from our universe of style and culture, get *GQ* on demand by following @britishgq on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

Inside the *GQ* and Paul Smith Academy for the Fashionably Gifted

At the newly minted Fashion Residency, a joint operation is reigniting London's rightful place as the cradle of design talent – and six ascendant brands are benefiting from free studio space and mentorship from the big man himself.

By STUART BRUMFITT

From left: model Tyyuki, designer Yaku Stapleton, designer Anastasiya Kuzmich and model Ness Star.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **JAMES ROBJANT**
STYLED BY **BEA BOSLEY**

GQ World
Fashion

ON A VAST FLOOR above the old Smithfield meat market, six very different design teams are preparing for fashion week. They're the first cohort in the Fashion Residency, a new mentorship programme that wants to light a fire under British design and turbo-charge a capital city that's responsible for the likes of McQueen, Westwood and McCartney. Some mentorship schemes are tokenistic and tail off on their commitments, but this one, courtesy of Paul Smith's Foundation, *GQ*, the Mayor of London's office and event space provider Projekt, gives young designers a full suite of support. There's guidance, counsel and – maybe the most valuable thing of all – free studio space in an absurdly expensive city.

Since Paul Smith moved from making clothes in a small rented room in Nottingham to running a global fashion empire, he's always been a nucleus of energy and ideas. This new hub for design talent is an extension of that. "The foundation is a dream come true for me," says Smith, 78. "Without realising it, I've sort of been helping young designers and creatives for many, many years. But being able to formalise it and having free studio spaces, as well as such a comprehensive programme of mentorship for six very deserving and talented designers, is what I have always wanted."

The inaugural brands are a perfect spoonful of London's fashion gumbo. Some are well-established; some straight out of fashion college. Between them, they've dressed the likes of Rihanna, Kim Kardashian and Joanna Lumley. The six for this year (selected from an impressive pool of over 170 applicants) are Paolina Russo, Yaku, Laura Pitharas, Karoline Vitto, Paolo Carzana and Pauline Dujancourt, and were assembled by Smith, Justine Simons OBE, London's Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries; and *GQ*'s deputy global editorial director Adam Baidawi.

The glue to this union? "Potential!" says Smith. "There was a tremendous volume of applications, quite understandably, and the variety is something that I was really amazed by. With the first cohort of six I think we've found a group with really incredible potential and hopefully they can learn from each other."

Left: Paolo Carzana. *Below*: looks from previous shows.

PAOLO CARZANA

Paolo Carzana's studio feels like it'd have belonged to a young John Galliano or Alexander McQueen. He's turned the office-style environment into a cocoon of draped materials and glowing light. From here he works with mushroom leather, aloe vera silks and antique fabrics, hand-making and hand-dyeing pieces that are worn by names like Zendaya and Michaela Coel. He's even sold some pieces to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Sleeping Beauties* exhibition.

Despite press and high-profile clients, the brand is still relatively small: Carzana works in splendid isolation apart from daily phone calls with his collaborator, Nasir Mazhar.

"I work in quite an extreme way and being here has complemented that, because I don't think I've ever felt so safe. If you're here at 4am, you can come outside and there's all the workers from the meat market. It feels like such a sacred pocket of tradition," he says, "and also the joys of working as well. The noise never stops. It's encouraging. And when the market isn't on, it's Fabric nightclub!"

Carzana sees the blessings of this programme: "Every single session has been really exciting. Everything we've been taught has been done in a very intimate and understandable way. It's been conversational throughout, whether it's lawyers and contacts or creativity. And that's really important."

PAOLO CARZANA: AW24 AND SS24, VOGUE RUNWAY; SS24, ISIDORE MONTAG.

PAULINE DUJANCOURT

Pauline Dujancourt's intricate, subversive knitwear made her a 2024 LVMH Prize finalist; the brand is now on rails at Dover Street Market and 10 Corso Como in Milan. She works with unconventional materials, like metal yarn, and learned knitting techniques from watching Turkish grandmas crocheting on YouTube. (She has since taught her own skills to women in Lima, Peru.)

The Paris-born designer moved to the UK 10 years ago. "I was so into the London scene. I thought it was so much more creative and full of energy, and then I didn't leave," she says. She did a graduate diploma at the London College of Fashion, followed by work at Simone Rocha and Rejina Pyo. Then Covid changed everything.

"I was locked in at somebody's place, not even my own, and I needed to create something so as not to lose my mind." She decided to do an MA at Central Saint Martins; the day after her graduation show, she got her first order: "I was like: 'OK, I guess we're creating the brand!'"

The programme has kept things moving. "It's such a blessing. I used to work in a basement with no windows, sharing the space. This is a huge improvement. More space means more hands. I could have more interns, so it's way more organised," she says. "A year ago, I was working part-time on the brand and I had a part-time job designing for other people. Then it blew up in 2024, which was great, but a bit disturbing in a way. Having that space has drastically changed my daily life and the running of the business."

Right, from left: Pauline Dujancourt's undone elegance; the designer pictured in London.

Left: Karoline Vitto. *Below*: Model Alva Claire at one of Vitto's shows.

KAROLINE VITTO: ALVA CLAIRE, ANA FLORES.

KAROLINE VITTO

Karoline Vitto has what might be the nicest room at the Smithfield space, with arched Victorian windows overlooking the market. It's a far cry from the Catford studio she rented before.

Vitto is known for her sexy, sporty, bodycon clothes, many of which come with adjustable hardware that sculpts to the wearer. Her work brings to mind Tom Ford–era Gucci (a heady mix of sex and elegance), but she's actually worked closely with another Italian house. After a recommendation from her "guardian angel", fashion stylist and *Perfect* magazine editor Katie Grand, Vitto received fabric sourcing and show production support from Dolce & Gabbana for her SS24 collection. She was the first designer to send exclusively plus-size models down the runway. Many wear her clothes off the catwalk, too: she's a favourite of Paloma Elsesser, Precious Lee, Shygirl and Beth Ditto.

Vitto's education continues under Paul Smith's Foundation. "The way he's collected objects, built collections... it's all part of the process," she says. "Meeting him at his headquarters, touring the building, hearing his stories – it was invaluable."

YAKU

While some of the studios at Smithfields are calm and sometimes solitary, Yaku has up to 12 people working on a collection. The Leeds Beckett and Central Saint Martins alumnus, whose work splices ravey traveller gear with Afrofuturism, has collaboration at heart. He's worked with Nike, MSCHF and Canada Goose, and dressed Dizzee Rascal.

Yaku isn't much of a football fan, but he likes to think of his collective creative approach as an equivalent of Johan Cruyff's "Total Football" philosophy, where every player is capable of doing everything. "And there's a team of people involved who have different interests and viewpoints that can contribute," he says. "It's just about finding ways that everyone can have an impact in the process, which I think is how we've been able to improve so quickly."

Yaku says there's nothing like the Paul Smith Foundation programme out there. "I've done things before where there's been mentoring promised in some way, shape or form, but it doesn't really happen or doesn't really feel like it's helping you to improve," he says. "This has been really surprising. There's so much guidance and nurturing that you get, which is unmatched."

Above: the designer in his trademark radiant casuals. *Right*: an architectural puffer jacket from the Yaku x Canada Goose collab.

LAURA PITHARAS

In this global age, labels don't often read "made in Britain". Yorkshire-born Laura Pitharas wants to change that by using cloth merchants like Leeds-based Alfred Brown and Dugdale in Huddersfield (where her granny is from) to make her menswear-inspired womenswear. She loves the generational aspect of it all. "When I visited the mill, I discovered entire family histories woven into its fabric – grandparents, parents, and now their children, all contributing to this legacy," she says.

Pitharas' life and business are based in London, "but I didn't want to forget the North," she says. "It's so classic of a Northern person, isn't it? But I'm incredibly proud of where I come from and it was really important for me to really recognise the industry in the North. It made sense to do."

Pitharas's story runs close to Smith's: she's a provincial power player with tailoring at the heart of her brand. Plus, Paul Smith is a label she grew up around. "Paul was always a fashion hero of mine. My family literally buy from Paul Smith," she says. "It's always my go-to for my dad's Christmas presents and my husband actually wore Paul Smith to our wedding. So it felt like a real, natural connection."

Right: Laura Pitharas in her studio. *Below, from left*: frequent client Sam Harvey and stylist and collaborator Harriet Nicolson.

YAKU X CANADA GOOSE, COURTESY OF THE BRAND.

PAOLINA RUSSO

This sportswear-inspired brand, headed up by duo Paolina Russo and Lucile Guilmard, mixes technology with craft to riff on their respective Canadian and French backgrounds. With Rihanna, Caroline Polachek, FKA Twigs and K-pop sensations New Jeans on the books, you'd assume that a label like this one would already be too big for a programme like this.

Not so, says Russo: "For brands at our stage, it's the most crucial time to have this sort of support, because we have to take the next step. We want to scale, we want to grow our team. We're hitting a situation where London is extremely expensive, and the wholesale market has really changed, so being a part of this, and receiving the mentorship that we get from the foundation is so crucial. "

The team doesn't want the programme to end: "We were in Paris for the showrooms and we told a lot of people about the foundation," says Russo. "People are so impressed. Even buyers from New York or in America, they're like, 'Oh, we need more things like this across the industry, because it's one thing to have a really creative business and another thing to sustain and to grow.'"

Designers and team at Paolina Russo. *Right, from left*: Lucile Guilmard, Paolina Russo, Paola Gagliardi, Gavin Gega, JooJoo Ahn, JK Kim, Florence Grellier, Lily Yeung. *Below, from left*: Hyeyeon Jang, Meenkyung Kim, Florence Grellier, Paola Gagliardi, JK Kim, Yewon Bae, Gavin Gega, Lily Yeung.

HAIR, KACHI KATSUYA. MAKE-UP, ALEXIS DAY, USING KATE SOMERVILLE SKIN & VIOLETTE FR. AND AGA DOBOSZ.

Celebrate spring with MR MARVIS' sophisticated trousers. Try one of our new styles, like The Easy Chinos, or opt for trusted favourites like The Longs and The Seersuckers. Busy wedding season on the cards? Pair the lightweight Linens with the new Linen Shacket and one of our refined shirts. Made in Portugal. Discover MR MARVIS' full collection now on **mrmarvis.co.uk**

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GQ World Watches

The Omega Seamaster Diver 300m in bronze gold and burgundy.

The Omega That Bond Built

For 30 years, Omega has been 007's watch of choice. Now, with a new Seamaster, the Swiss maker is letting some of that superspy allure spill over into its main line.

By CAM WOLF

I WASN'T *NOT* like James Bond. In January, after I solemnly swore to protect Omega's classified information (ie signing an NDA), the storied watchmaker issued me a precious piece of equipment in order to complete an operation of the utmost importance. The gadget in question? A new, top secret Omega Seamaster Diver 300m in bronze gold – the brand's proprietary blend of nine-carat gold, silver, and palladium – with a burgundy bezel. My mission? Simple, really: test-drive the sickest wristwear not yet on the market.

I bring up 007 for a couple of reasons. The first is that my orders were similar to those of former Bond and current Omega ambassador Daniel Craig, whom the brand routinely tasks with wearing unreleased watches at high-profile events – the Venice Film Festival, the Olympics – to whet the public's appetite. Unfortunately for Omega, I'm not papped quite as frequently as Craig, so the watch largely remained my little secret over the weeks I spent wearing it.

While the Seamaster has served as Omega's primary design in its dive-watch line since 1948, the story of this latest edition begins 30 years ago. With the release of 1995's *GoldenEye* – Pierce Brosnan's debut as the superspy – Bond cemented Omega as his official watch brand of choice, following decades of bouncing between Rolex, Seiko, and TAG Heuer on screen. Ever since, 007 has unwaveringly worn a Seamaster, linking Bond to the timepiece as inextricably as the 1969 moon landing to the astronaut-worn Speedmaster.

Omega has, of course, released several 007 Edition Seamasters over the years to coincide with the films. What's notable about the one I was furnished with is that it isn't officially a Bond collaboration – and yet the franchise's influence remains all over the design. It's a sign of just how important Bond remains to Omega and its future.

Nearly five years after Craig retired as Bond, and with plans for his successor still under wraps, Omega is finding ways to let the 007 aesthetic trickle into the rest of its catalogue. The brand-new Seamaster is the direct descendant of a special edition made to commemorate 2021's *No Time to Die*. That watch featured a matte dial, toffee-toned hour markers, aged hands, and a handsome mesh bracelet – all of which transferred to this latest release, only swapping the utilitarian titanium for Omega's luxurious alloy. The bracelet, in particular – a bold upgrade over the Seamaster's typical metal links or rubber straps – turned plenty of heads during drop-offs at my son's school. It might not share the military dial markings and explicit 007 branding of the *No Time to Die* watch, but the Bond vibes are undeniably strong here.

A piece like this, with roots in diving but fashioned from precious metals, eliminates the need to own both a dress watch and sports watch. (Bond never needed both.) This watch could comfortably be worn while bopping around to all your various engagements: black-tie poker games with world-conquering villains, rugged strolls through the Scottish Highlands, high-speed chases in the latest Aston Martin.

In the watch industry, the victor is often the brand telling the best story. The first mountaineers to climb Everest carried Rolexes; Steve McQueen zoomed through *Le Mans* in a TAG Heuer; and Cartier always finds its way onto the wrists of royalty, from Princess Diana to Taylor Swift.

Omega, which managed to leverage the moon landing as rocket fuel to build its own empire, knows that the average person doesn't buy a watch because of the movement inside but for what it represents. And there are not many people – fictional or otherwise – that men want to be like more than James Bond. Even a passing association is enough to turn this handsome Seamaster into a hit.

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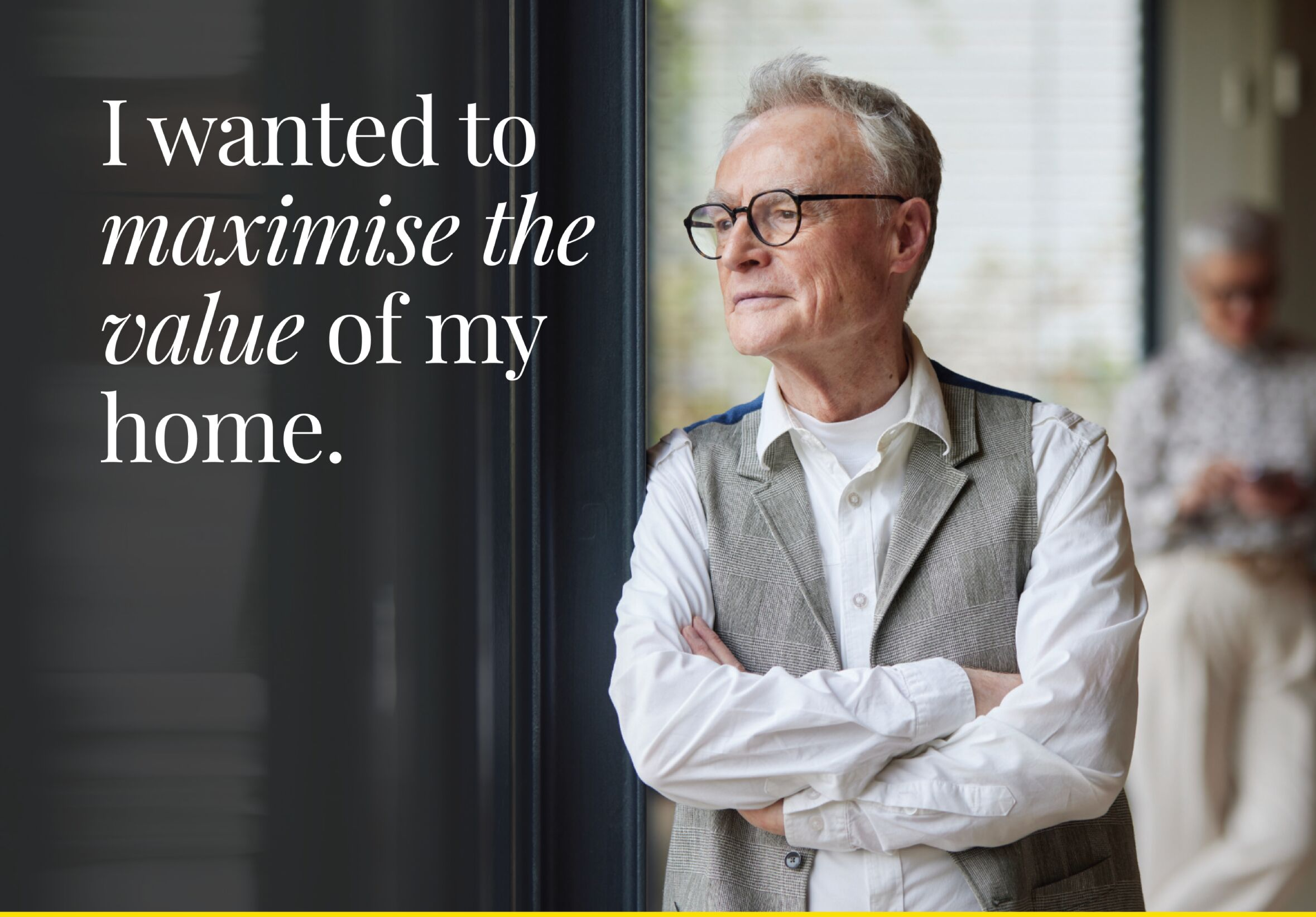
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The Dutiful Method of Cosmo Jarvis

***Shōgun*'s awards-season sweep has suddenly presented the British actor with the opportunities most would dream of – working with Robert De Niro, leading a stacked cast of hot new things in Alex Garland's *Warfare*, and, yes, attending various glamorous promotional events. He's less keen on that last part.**

By SHAAD D'SOUZA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **JOE CRUZ**
STYLED BY **ANGELO MITAKOS**

COSMO JARVIS IS NOT A METHOD ACTOR, but he does have *a* method. Case in point: when we meet on a frigid January afternoon at London's Soho Hotel, he stands up swiftly from his table, shakes my hand, and greets me in taut Received Pronunciation – an accent he's been living in for a couple of weeks as prep for a role in a forthcoming Guy Ritchie film, albeit one not far from his usual Devonshire accent. Then he unzips his bag and slips out a dinky blue and yellow lump of plastic. He pauses. "I'm terribly sorry, but would you mind if I go outside to vape for a moment?"

On the spectrum of method acting from "none" to "Joaquin Phoenix", this is on the lighter end. And thank God for that: if Jarvis really tried to live as the characters he plays, he would have spent various points of the past year embodying a sexual predator, a buffoonish mobster and a Navy Seal, as preparation for his roles in Australian prison flick *Inside*, period mob drama *The Alto Knights* and Alex Garland's gritty Iraq War film *Warfare*, respectively. The vastly different films all come out in the first half of this year, meaning that Jarvis is taking three sharp left turns in a matter of months – enough to give anyone whiplash. Not that he seems to have lost any sense of self amid the constant work. Today, he's dressed in a grey shirt and nondescript brown hoodie, a neoprene Therabody crossbody slung over his chest – less an expression of perfectly curated gorp, I sense, as much as what happened to be around when he was leaving the house.

Jarvis, 35, broke out last year with his portrayal of John Blackthorne, a British navigator thrust into the cutthroat world of 16th-century Japanese politics, in Disney+'s Emmy-sweeping epic *Shōgun*. His performance, which saw Blackthorne develop from an oafish character (punching through a shoji wall, getting pelted with fish guts) into a sharp-minded political operator, earned rave reviews. As is often the case with actors on the rise, Jarvis is working hard to stay booked and busy while maintaining the dedication to the craft of acting. "What's interesting about it is that, in a lot of ways, it is a magic trick – every single person who does it, because of their own cerebral condition, emotional condition, experience, they do it in their own way," he says.

Jarvis's personal approach to that magic trick sounds strenuous. His *Shōgun* co-stars Hiroyuki Sanada and Anna Sawai both recall hearing him yelling from his trailer between takes. "It concerned me at first," says Sawai via email, "but later I learned it was to maintain Blackthorne's voice. I didn't know his real voice until we reunited a year and a half later to do press." That's a common theme among Jarvis's colleagues. Will Poulter, who plays a member of Jarvis's Seal platoon in *Warfare*, remembers that "he had this infallible American accent – so, so good and so convincing, in fact, that I could have sworn he was American. It made me doubt that he was actually British."

When Jarvis and I speak, he is – with the exception of the accent – emphatically Cosmo Jarvis: devoted husband, loving father, and nicotine-free save for that pineapple ice vape, a "nasty habit" he's trying to kick. When he's shooting, he goes in a little further. While working on *Inside*, he would take walks through Melbourne's Carlton Gardens, talking to himself in an Australian accent and "getting to know Mark", the born-again rapist-murderer he plays, in addition to doing research on "people who have self-mutilated, people who have done heinous things in their pasts… people who have been terrifically abused when they were younger."

Research and accent work, at least, seems a little easier than repeatedly subjecting oneself to freezing cold Vancouver waters, which Jarvis has also done. During one *Shōgun* scene, Blackthorne has to show his diving skills to Sanada's Lord Toranaga. "Our crew had a stunt double for shots where they felt it unnecessary for Cosmo to dip in the water, but he

OPENING PAGE
Jacket by **Giorgio Armani.** Jeans by **Levi's.** Shoes by **Manolo Blahnik.**

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Polo shirt by **Orlebar Brown.**

insisted he did it himself for every take," recalls Sawai.

That's what Jarvis actually likes about the job. He sometimes looks almost frightened at the prospect of having to actually *talk* about said job, especially because he feels he shouldn't be expected to engage in anything like red carpets or awards shows or, ahem, press. "Why should anybody," he says, "give a damn, a single rat's ass, about anything I have to say?"

***WARFARE* WAS CO-WRITTEN** and co-directed by former Navy Seal Ray Mendoza, and is closely based on his own experiences in Iraq. The film takes place in real time, meaning that Jarvis and his co-stars – including Poulter, Kit Connor, *Reservation Dogs* breakout D'Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai, Noah Centineo, Joseph Quinn, Charles Melton and basically every other internet boyfriend under the sun – had to undergo a four-week boot camp before the month-long shoot. Living in the same hotel, the group ate every meal together and tried to bond as if they were really in a platoon. "Usually, you're a hired hand, and you have the responsibility to play one fictional character, and you contribute that to whatever the overall thing is," says Jarvis. "This was very different – we all just became a unit, and that unit extended beyond the limitations of traditional acting work. It became like a brotherhood."

The experience, Jarvis says, was "very un-filmlike", and different from any movie he'd worked on before. Working together "became essential to the actual filming process," he says. "We learned how to look out for each other and how to recognise each other's strengths and weaknesses, and who among us needed certain kinds of encouragement. It was really an exercise."

Poulter says that Jarvis "sort of became the beating heart of the group", despite, perhaps, an initial resistance. "Cosmo is so averse to being the centre of attention, or having praise directed at him, that I think, even for him, hearing that he was the beating heart, or having it expressed by the guys how much we loved him, was uncomfortable for him," says Poulter. "I think at the end, he loved us too."

Poulter is alluding to the fact that in person Jarvis is painfully reserved; Sawai describes him as "soft, a little shy, but so authentically himself". Kit Connor, another co-star in *Warfare*, says this sturdiness and humility were beneficial on a film that was so intense. "He's incredibly humble and incredibly normal, in a lot of ways. He keeps to himself, and is not flashy at all. He's not arrogant," Connor recalls. "Cosmo really is a rarity as an actor, because his commitment to it is absurd – I found it genuinely incredibly inspiring, because he would put himself through the mill. He would really put himself through the wringer."

Jarvis would, it seems, rather spend time in said wringer than tend to the non-acting side of his job. He finds talking to his agents, to filmmakers, sorting out conflicts and schedules and so on – the "whole plethora of activities that amount to maybe, or maybe not, acquiring another piece of employment" – a distraction. "It's not what I signed up for, and I'm not good at the other stuff. It's simpler when you're just employed, do one thing: 'this is the character'. When it becomes about all the other stuff to do with more choices – I'm terribly bad at choices," he says. "I do sometimes think, Really, how has this got anything to do with what I'm supposed to be doing? You know what my job is, right?"

If it seems hard for Jarvis to talk about his personal life, or his method, or most things, he becomes animated when talking about his distaste for awards shows. "Why do people tune in and watch those things? It baffles me. It seems to spoil the illusion of the movie or the TV show or whatever it is," he says. While he's happy that his colleagues on *Shōgun* are being recognised for their hard work in the form of

GQ World
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T-shirt, his own.

Golden Globes and Emmys, in a room like the Golden Globes, where he was a few weeks ago, he felt "terrible". "I read somewhere that [awards shows] were basically invented so producers could praise people, and then get them to do the kind of work they wanted to do," he says conspiratorially. (His publicist emails me a couple of weeks later to clarify this: red carpets, Jarvis has discovered, seemingly hark back to Ancient Greece.)

Origins aside, at the Soho Hotel, Jarvis is resolute about his feelings about their modern permutations: "It feels like a disingenuous representation – film sets are places of work, and there's problems to overcome, there's time management, there's deadlines, there's all kinds of issues that pop up. So it feels odd that suddenly you're royalty."

He pauses and glances into the distance for a second, thinking. "I don't know. Maybe I'm being a Scrooge."

PERHAPS JARVIS DISLIKES the idea of existing in an industry that has hugely cumbersome machinery because, growing up, he learned to do everything himself. As a teenager and 20-something, he produced his own films, released music and found notable success doing things in a totally independent way. Born in the US to an American mother and a British father, he was brought up in Devon. His parents divorced when he was young. He draws out his sentences as he tries to describe growing up in Totnes. "I lived with my mum and my brother, and we tried to, you know, grow up, I guess. There wasn't much in the way of…" He trails off. "I guess ways out of that… place. I mean, yeah." He stops for another five seconds. "It was just fine."

This drawn-out manner of speaking isn't a new thing, which I know because Jarvis has been doing press for the better part of 15 years, just not as an actor. A 2011 *Guardian* profile pegged to his music – the kind of twee folk-rap-pop hybrid that flourished in the Myspace era – finds him ruminating on the ills of the millennial generation and taking extended pauses to collect his thoughts. I remember his music being big at the time, although now he "wouldn't exactly call it a career". He was perhaps best known for a song called "Gay Pirates", a rollicking and very 2011 bar-room singalong in which he told a story of gay pirates who longed to escape the tyranny of their cruel captain. The track – which featured a video made by and starring Jarvis that someone has evidently since tried to take off the internet, given that only bootlegs exist on YouTube – went viral in the early 2010s era of peak cultural liberalism and, perhaps for that reason, Jarvis struggles to talk about his music at all now. "It's just completely irrelevant to me – it's another life," he says. "I never really enjoyed it in the first place. It was painful. Obviously, music's great, but my place in it was not… it was a habit. It was a bad habit."

Pursuing music, he says, was a means to becoming an actor. And while he doesn't regret it – everything in his past that he cringes at, he says, led him to his wife and baby and flourishing career – he just feels that he has "nothing to do with it." While supporting himself with his music, he wrote and directed *The Naughty Room*, a dark comedy about a teenager whose mother forces him to live in their bathroom, which premiered on BBC Four in 2012. From there, he slowly began to move away from music. His permanent escape route arrived in the form of 2016's *Lady Macbeth*, William Oldroyd's period drama about a woman (Florence Pugh) who begins an affair with a labourer (Jarvis) and pulls him into a web of twisted marital and societal drama. Between that and 2019's Irish crime flick *Calm With Horses*, it wasn't long until music was something Jarvis could feasibly claim was totally irrelevant to him.

THIS PAGE
T-shirt, vintage, from **Rokit.**

OPPOSITE PAGE
Cap by **Gant.** T-shirt by **Rails.**

"Why do people tune in and watch awards shows? It baffles me. It seems to spoil the illusion of the movie or TV show or whatever it is."

> “A job, for me, it’s a very absolute thing. I find it quite difficult to ‘live’ in between the beginning and the end.”

Now, Jarvis says, he doesn’t listen to (or play) music, doesn’t read – except when preparing for roles, as when he read *Shōgun*’s source material, or all that stuff about mutilation and child abuse for *Inside* – and “barely” watches any films, unless he “sort of [has] to”. “I make terrariums and hang out with my wife and baby, take a walk, eat some food. That’s about it, really,” he says. “My work, or the pursuing of work, pretty much consumes me, so there’s not much time to do anything. But one day, it’d be nice to have a nice garden and do all that stuff. I’d like to learn about trees.”

He also doesn’t follow any particular fitness regime, and tries not to stay in any particular shape, as you never know when you’ll need to adjust your physique for a role. “I realised that [exercise] is good for mental health, so I try to walk, and I occasionally do 100 Navy Seal burpees, but that’s about it,” he says. When he’s on set – even on a gruelling film like *Warfare* – he doesn’t do anything to try and ameliorate his mental health, either, besides taking walks. “Maybe I’ll grow out of this, but a job, for me, it’s a very absolute thing. I find it quite difficult to live – ‘live’ in quotation marks – in between the beginning and the end,” he says. “I find it quite hard to function in a sort of ordinary way. It’s a bit like a marathon.”

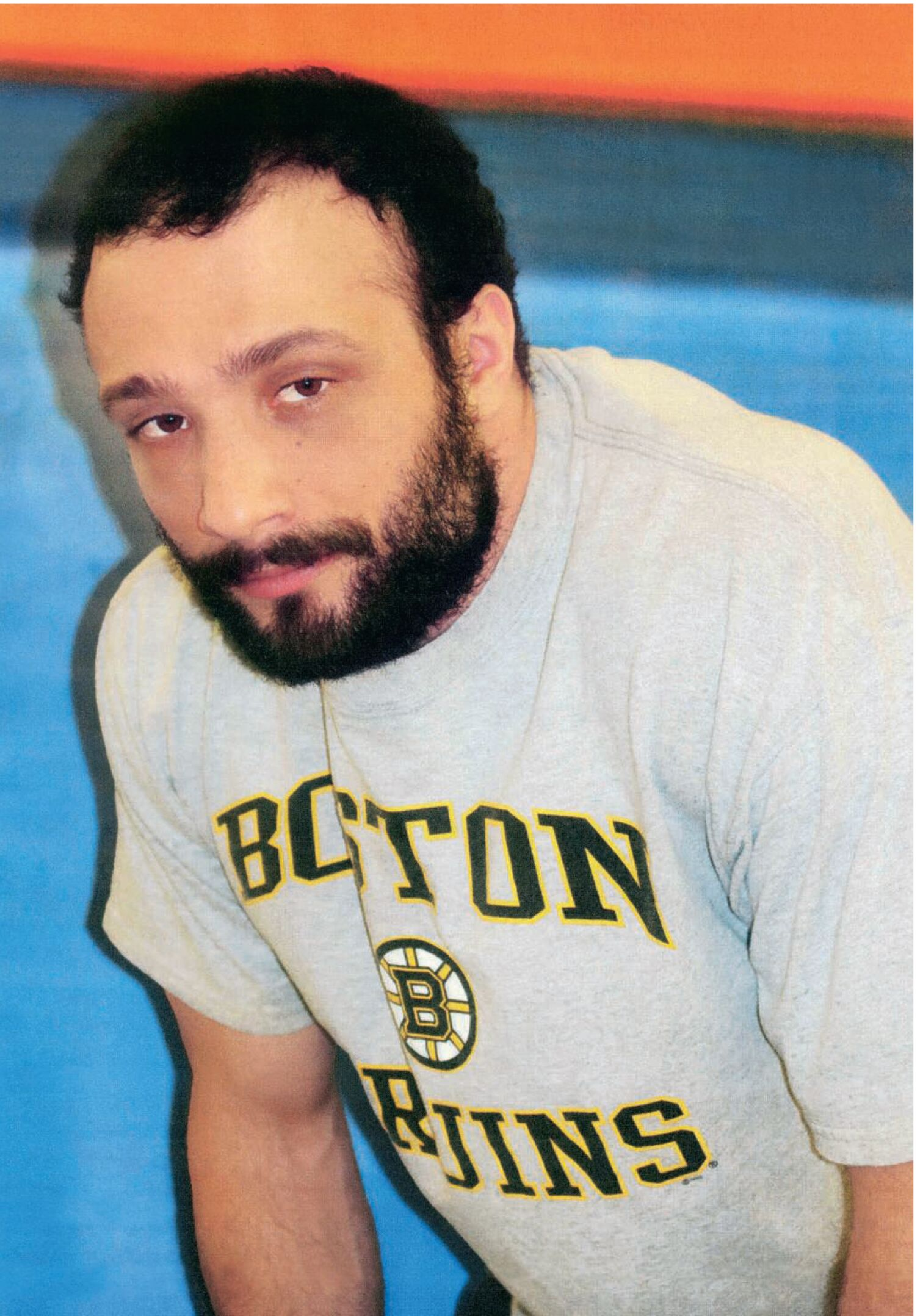
For his role in *Alto Knights,* in which he plays real-life mobster Vincent Gigante, alongside Robert De Niro, Jarvis was required to wear a fat suit, but he also wanted to experience the physicality of the role. “When I realised they wanted him to be larger, I tried to eat as much as I could, to make –” he grabs the skin under his chin “– this part of my neck bigger,” he says. He also wore tighter-fitting clothes to seem bigger. “I didn’t actually have to gain that weight,” he says. (Perhaps I’m reading into it, but I swear he sounds the tiniest bit forlorn about this.)

He is typically circumspect when talking about working with De Niro. “There’s a moment where you think, ‘Oh my God, I’ve been watching this guy my whole life.’ But then it becomes very obvious very quickly that dispensing with that and getting on with it is what needs to be done,” he says. “He’s like all of us – he’s just trying to do his job.”

That, it seems, might have been the most inspiring thing about working with one of cinema’s all-time greats. Earlier, Jarvis had been reluctant to talk about his wife or baby, but he did offer one insight into what fatherhood had given him. “It’s nice to have other people to care about – it does make things a bit less complicated,” he said. “At the very least, you know you have a bare-minimum responsibility to them. And so I like that part of it, because it means this is still a job. As well as being some crazy artistic crusade, it’s also fundamentally a job.”

After the first season of *Shōgun* (a second is reportedly in development), big offers started coming through. But although he has said yes to some of them – including a part in Christopher Nolan’s *The Odyssey* – it’s the challenging stuff, with accents and combat scenes, that Jarvis gravitates towards more than paycheques. “I’m just keeping an eye out for interesting roles, things that seem to me like their existence is necessary as a script,” he says. “Those only come along once in a blue moon anyway.” Of course, his agents are trying to drill a sense of moderation into him. “Somewhere along the line,” he says, “one has to build a career.” ■

SHAAD D’SOUZA *is a writer based in London.*



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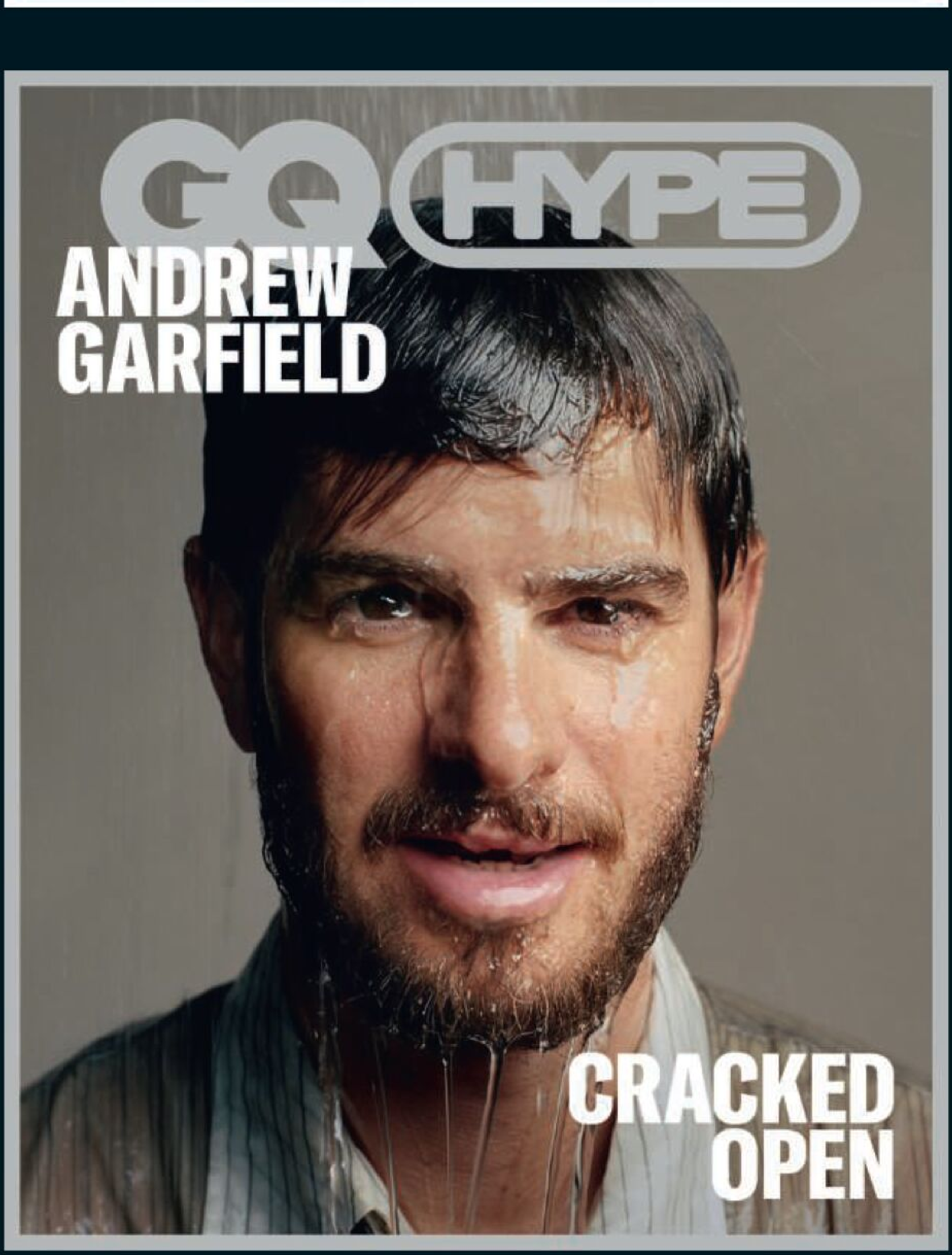
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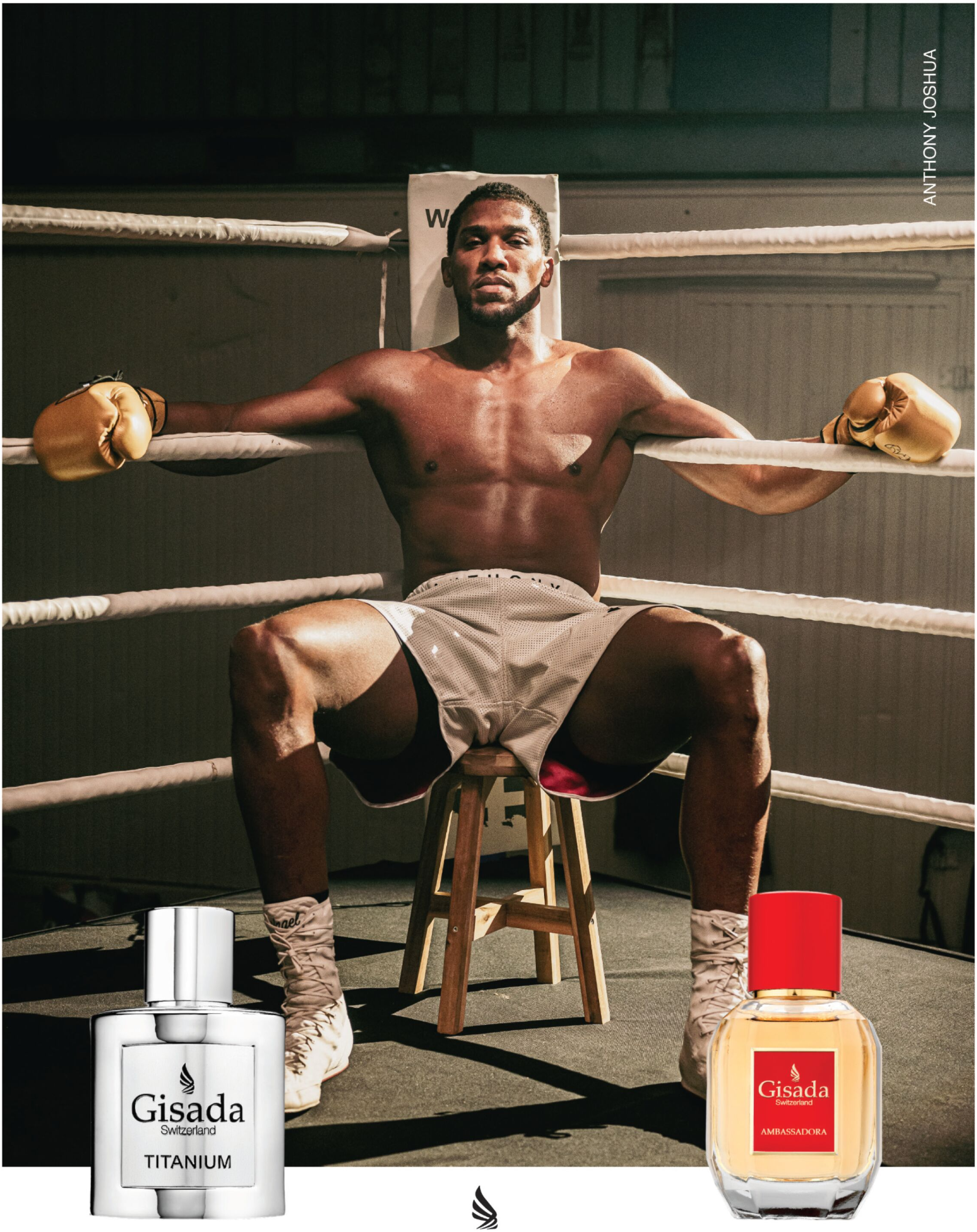
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The Strange Case of Avestan, the Cult Scent Whose Secret Died With its Creator

The founder of the behemoth skincare empire Deciem left behind a mysterious perfume. Millions of fans, tourists and influencers have been buying it (and trying to guess what exactly is in it) ever since.

By OLIVIA OVENDEN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **CHRISTOPHER MITCHELL**

LATE ONE AFTERNOON LAST DECEMBER, I found myself at Soho's unofficial perfume junction on a scent trail. At the corners of Beak Street and Lexington Street – where Le Labo, Aesop and the rounded corner edge of Byredo's vertiginous white townhouse all meet – a minimalist and mysterious shop was pulling in both determined tourists and curious passersby. I stopped two girls in their early 20s leaving the store carrying bags. One had discovered Avestan on social media – where it is a viral hit – and she'd brought her friend to buy the single perfume the store sells (the only thing they sell) to take back home to Taiwan.

I had walked past Avestan before and assumed it was the reception area of a subterranean spa, or a tasteful small-plates restaurant that had gone bankrupt halfway through the fit-out. Once, after dark, I noticed grainy video footage being projected onto the walls while the room flickered with candlelight. It looked like a shrine to something, or someone. It turns out that bit was partly true.

Avestan is what Brandon Truaxe, the founder of skincare company Deciem, was working on with a perfumer when he fell from a building in Toronto and died in January 2019. The scent, inspired by his Iranian heritage and trips to Morocco, was the last secretive act for a CEO who had behaved erratically in the final months of his life: announcing via Instagram that he was taking control of the company's marketing, and later that he was closing down Deciem because employees had been involved in "major criminal activity". Truaxe wanted nobody to know what the notes of the fragrance were, and when the Avestan shop finally opened in December 2019, they kept his secret. It became a hit, selling 1 million bottles in its first year, and enjoying swells in popularity each time an influencer shares the brand story as though they've just discovered Homer's *Odyssey*.

The fragrance has found its audience in TikTok's perfume community and on Chinese social media sites Xiaohongshu (or Little Red Book, known in English as Red Note) and the YouTube-like platform BiliBili. In the videos, fans share the Avestan lore, emphasising that it can only be bought at this one store in Soho and not online. The rarefied, if-you-know-you-know positioning of the brand makes it perfect for the "Come with me to this little place in London"-style videos that clog up social media, and leaves Avestan feeling like a case that fans are trying to collectively solve. For tourists ticking off the shop on their trip to London – a big chunk of the brand's customer base – the £38 perfume is the grooming equivalent of a slice of pizza in Naples: cheap to buy, but you have to pay for the privilege of getting there first.

Avestan withholding the perfume's notes gives its wearers a choose-your-own-adventure, making for some fun detective work in videos where people guess what they are smelling. "I'm getting almost like a toasted rice scent, and some clay," says one TikTok sleuth. "Woody, herby, unique," says another, hedging their bets. "It reminds me of ceramics that have been fired and they've been put in the kiln but they've not been glazed with any paint yet. So they're incredibly dry and you can almost scratch off the dust," says a very precise #PerfumeTok influencer. In the case of the latter, it's hard not to wonder if this image has come to him not from smelling the perfume, but from knowing the scent was inspired by a trip Truaxe took to the Atlas Mountains in Morocco.

I took a bottle home and spritzed it all over my wrists, just as perfume testers will tell you not to do if you want a neutral reading. On my skin – which will have absorbed and rejected different molecules to the Avestan wearers online – there is a blast of sharp green that is somewhere between a gin and tonic and the synthetic alpine smell of a car air freshener. I go back a few minutes later and it's been replaced with the spicy, smoky haze of a shisha pipe. The final drydown (the term in perfumery for how the scent smells when fully dried on the skin) leaves behind a peppery, potpourri pile of embers. All the time I'm smelling, one blunt description lingers: "It smells like pesto."

FRAGRANCE TRENDS CAN arguably be measured by the scent trails you encounter on the street. Around 2019, the not-quite-right sandalwood smell of Le Labo's Santal 33 was so dominant in east London bars and gym changing rooms that a friend asked me, with some concern, why all the girls these days smelled like the synthetic cocaine-ecstasy hybrid mephedrone, unsettled by the noxious plume that wearers left in their wake. Then (from the same perfumer, Frank Voelkl) there was Glossier's You, which evoked what men's grooming influencer Robin James (who posts as @manforhimself) describes to me as a similarly "cotton-like, cocooning, soft scent". In recent years, the "rich girl perfume" Baccarat Rouge 540 has boomed, even as it divides opinions for its strange mix of burnt sugar and rubbery plastic.

Avestan is gender-neutral in its branding, but the perfume's secretive approach allows, in the brand's own words, "a welcomed occasion to explore" for its wearers. Still, we are given hints. The bottle, which sits inside a corrugated cardboard sleeve, has the smooth feeling of polished clay, or metal that has been painted over. Then there's the store itself, with white textured walls containing fragments of blue Moroccan tiles and a black box camera hanging from its strap on one wall. On the wooden shelves beside display bottles are stacks of books, including religious texts in Dutch and a copy of *1984*. An employee tells me that at the height of the mania a few years ago, security guards manned the doors at weekends. It is the sort of aesthetic ("disused Victorian factory meets orangerie", according to one Reddit user) that feels staged for Instagram, and perhaps to underscore the temptation to show it off. Avestan's official policy is that no photography or recording is allowed.

That technically isn't enforced, say Lizi Aston and Shahin Golshahr, who work in the marketing department for Deciem, the parent company of both Avestan and skincare brand The Ordinary. In early January I meet them around the corner from the shop. They tell me that everything inside was personally selected by Truaxe himself, and that the store has been left as he last used it in tribute.

In November, Avestan opened a pop-up in New York's SoHo, this time selling a different scent that Truaxe had worked on: Svalbard. Golshahr, who is wearing the Svalbard perfume oil in his beard, says it's a more Arctic scent – inspired by the Global Seed Vault in Norway, which serves as the world's largest backup of crops in case of a worldwide disaster. A permanent Svalbard store in New York will open this year, but other expansions will be done purely on the basis of vibes, and whether they're in line with what Truaxe might have felt was right. His commitment to transparent pricing (the strategy that made The Ordinary such a hit) will not change any time soon – a sales assistant tells me their initial hope was merely to break even.

Golshahr applied to work at The Ordinary because of Truaxe, and later befriended him. He recalls walking with him to the Beak Street store one day and Truaxe talking about his mother being from Isfahan, the same part of Iran that Golshahr's mother

Opposite: A bottle of Avestan is unassuming, unpretentious and unknowable – and therein lies the mystery.

came from. "People really connect it to a distant memory in their head," Golshahr says of Avestan. "It reminds me of a saffron rice pudding from Iran. I'm always wondering: was Brandon thinking about this when he created this scent?"

WHILE AVESTAN HAS made the idea of an exotic, mysterious exploration part of its story, all good perfumes are designed as a journey, with a beginning, middle and an end. The top notes are the molecules that evaporate fastest, giving way to middle notes that linger a little longer, and finally the base notes, which leave the longest trace. A lot of perfumes are top-loaded with citrus, which pulls you in but never lasts, while base notes are more enduring smells like musks and woods, which endure more easily on the skin.

Avestan – named for the ancient language of the Iranian religion Zoroastrianism – came into being on the back of Truaxe's travels. In his writing about the perfume, he references "coated clay vats filled with argan oil, earthy walls of a typical village abode and the mud that had formed on my bare feet having crossed the river that bordered the township of Asni in the Moroccan Atlas Mountains."

But as I discovered speaking to fragrance influencers (or "fragheads" as they are known online), nobody can quite agree where Avestan's journey starts, so different are the ways its notes hit the skin. "I smell a sort of powdery, rice-like quality, because I got a sample set from a brand called d'Annam. They had a fragrance called White Rice, [which is] trying to mimic the smell of rice, and it smells remarkably similar," says Tobi Duncan of the account @wonkynosesmells. "So I think it has some sort of rice-like notes, but it's also kind of a little bit spicy, a little bit citrusy, maybe grapefruit?"

For Dan Rothschild, who reviews perfumes as @fragrance_weirdo, the leafy, juniper-like notes I got didn't show up. Instead, he smelt peppery incense and then something close to concrete. He traces those notes back to Comme des Garçons' cult scent Avignon, which conjures a trip to an old cathedral, with heady frankincense top notes that give way to the smell of cold stone floors. "The Avestan one is very linear in the sense that it doesn't really develop," he tells me, describing a journey that feels cut short before you expect it to end.

One bright morning in late January, with a bottle of Avestan in my bag, I meet Professor Barry Smith at the University of London. Smith founded the Centre for the Study of the Senses here 15 years ago; his interest in fragrance began when he discovered a theory that says there are somewhere between 22 and 33 senses (not merely five), and also that they are all more interlinked than we might believe.

Smith spent years writing about wine, and sees the same terror in people's faces when asked to describe the taste of Malbec as when reacting to a vetiver perfume. "It's very, very difficult to name smells, because smells are actually learned in the context of having the thing in front of you," Smith says in a lilting Scottish accent. "You don't name the smell, you name the thing that caused the smell – orange, tar, leather. Unlike colours, there are no really good names for odours. You say 'fragrant' or 'putrid' or 'musty'."

The fear we have of being asked to identify smells – and the ways in which leading words like "herbaceous", "grassy" and "wild" can hijack our imagination – means Smith approves of Avestan's mysterious approach. He sprays some onto a cardboard strip and we stand in a circle with some colleagues who have come to lend their noses. As a group, we come up with thyme, rosemary, sandalwood, cedar, plasticine, potpourri, stone and juniper.

"Any perfume worth its salt is like a musical line," Smith says. "It starts one way and then develops and goes somewhere else. So if you take a slow, deep sniff of it, it's not a single thing. It sort of grows." I take one slow inhalation, and the alpine notes at the start drop into the burnt wood of a sauna. It's a mixture of sensations that would be easier to paint in dark greens and rusted brown than to say out loud, the precise names of what I'm smelling stuck on what Smith tells me is called "the tip of the nose".

There is an off smell in Avestan that for Smith was Play-Doh-like, and for perfume reviewer Rothschild was the unnatural smell of concrete. This chimes with the broader trend for funkiness, as scents that have something odd about them are increasingly popular on the niche fragrance scene. (The eccentric perfumer Alessandro Gualtieri, to name one, has a divisive scent called Nasomatto Sadonaso, which is said to smell like genital sweat and a public urinal.) But this dark fascination may in fact be wired in us. Smith tells me that in the white flower jasmine there is a low percentage of the compound indole, large amounts of which smell rotting and putrid. Perfumers can make artificial jasmine without indole, but out of the two, he says, people will always pick the jasmine with the indole. "Maybe having that slightly aversive, whiffy note actually provides a contrast with the good thing," he says. "It's as if there has to be a little pain with your pleasure."

WHEN I WAS 17, I bought a bottle of Molecule 01 from Escentric Molecules, the brand of German perfume maker Geza Schoen. The scent contained Iso E Super, an aroma chemical that reacts to (or "caramelises with", as the brand seductively puts it) your skin to create a different scent on each wearer. Iso E Super has been around since the '70s, and these days is present in many modern perfumes. Lately it's been having a big moment, present in large quantities in several fragrance hits of recent years, including DS & Durga's I Don't Know What and Paul Mescal's favourite scent, Le Labo's Another 13.

Molecule's 01's intoxicating promise – that a perfume could make you smell like the most "you" version of yourself – is part of how Avestan is sold to me by the store employees. On the street outside I speak to Vicki, who has bought a bottle of Avestan for her boyfriend. It was Avestan's seeming singularity that pulled her into the brand. "I don't know anyone who wears the perfume, because they only sell one scent, but on Little Red Book there's a lot of people saying it's really unique," she says. "Usually I'll look for brands that are not too well-known."

On the online perfume encyclopaedia Fragrantica, one reviewer writes of Avestan: "Forget the reviews that say grapefruit or cloves or any other ingredient. This is so unique that it smells exactly how you want it to smell." They may be right. Tristan Badard, a perfumer at Quintessence Fragrances, tells me that relying on lists of notes can actually throw us off a scent, even cause us to smell things that aren't there. He recounts a story about how he was presenting a fragrance pyramid (an industry tool that describes a scent's constituent parts, like tasting notes) to some clients, and ginger had mistakenly been included. "They said 'It's far too gingery, we can smell only the ginger, please remove the ginger'," he says. "We didn't have any in the fragrance."

BEAK STREET W1
AVESTAN

London's Beak Street store: the only place on the planet where Avestan can be bought.

> "Any perfume worth its salt is like a musical line. It starts one way and then develops and goes somewhere else."
> **—PROFESSOR BARRY SMITH**

On our call, Badard holds a testing strip laced with Avestan under his nose and sniffs. "The notes are really interesting, but it's not very complex," he says. "For me the story unfolds very quickly." Badard (a "nose", as they are called in the perfume world), gets thyme and rosemary, which evaporate very quickly, replaced by spicy black pepper, and then an ambery vanilla that nobody else has yet mentioned.

Somebody at Deciem has to know the recipe for Avestan, even if nobody is willing to disclose it; otherwise the supply would run dry. The deeper I search, though, it not only feels harder to say, but increasingly like I am spoiling the fun. One afternoon, I spray and breathe it in, thinking of Golshahr, who recalls the saffron rice pudding of Iran when he smells it. For him, the scent is a connection to a lost friend and a story that, by remaining partly untold, never truly ends. He'd like to keep it that way. "I was getting a sample from the lab and I was asking lots of questions," he told me. "They said, 'Do you want to know?' and I said, 'No, no. I want to have my own journey.'" ⌘

OLIVIA OVENDEN *is a* BRITISH GQ *contributor.*

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25 New Rules for Looking (and Smelling, and Feeling) Good

It's 2025: the cuts are getting shaggier, skincare is less woo-woo, more tech, and fragrance has never felt so bespoke. To navigate it all, you need *GQ*'s gospel of grooming commandments (straight from the industry's most trusted voices) to chart a path to a neater, sweeter, glowier you.

By MAHALIA CHANG

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **BENJAMIN LENNOX**
STYLED BY **ANGELO MITAKOS**

KNOW YOURSELF (AND YOUR HAIR)
Josh Knight is the man behind some of the best lids in Hollywood – including Paul Mescal's often copied but rarely equalled mini mullet. Knight's shortcut? "Know your face shape. It can make a huge difference in choosing a style that complements your features." If you don't have Mescal's oval-shaped face, mod-style cuts help soften heart-shaped faces. Squarer jaws (as seen on this handsome fella here) benefit from hair with a little more height.

MODEL, FELIX FRIEDMAN AT PREMIER MODELS. HAIRSTYLING, TAKUMI HORIWAKI. MAKE-UP, ELAINE LYNSKEY USING CHANEL LES BEIGES AND NO 1 DE CHANEL BODY SERUM-IN-MIST. CASTING, MC BARNES.

PREVIOUS PAGE
Jacket by **Brunello Cucinelli.** Vest by **Cos.**

THIS PAGE
Sunglasses by **Oakley.** Lip patches by **CurrentBody.**

OPPOSITE
All clothing, his own.

GIVE YOUR LIPS SOME LOVE

Lip balms and salves are tiny, so there’s no excuse not to carry one everywhere you go. Some of them are even infused with SPF and UVA and UVB filters, so your lips are nice and protected from that big, fiery ball of flame in the sky. ADAM CHEUNG, *GQ* STYLE WRITER

THE ’00S CALLED, AND THEIR BRAIDS STILL GO OFF

To shake up your regular braids, Toni & Guy stylist Dexter Dapper Johnson recommends a return to the noughties. Think patterned cornrows, beads and clamps. “You can show off your creativity with a variety of designs and patterns, but it allows your hair to stay neat, tidy and protected,” he says. “We’re also seeing a lot more durags and bonnets being worn in the daytime.”

GENTLENESS IS A VIRTUE

Applying skincare is one of the areas where bro-ing out is downright discouraged. Grooming and make-up expert Isamaya Ffrench explains: “Stop rubbing your creams and SPFs in so hard that they basically disappear. Creams, especially sun protectants, need to sit on the skin and create a barrier of film.”

AVOID FRAGRANCE IMPULSE BUYS

When shopping for perfume, leave a sample on your skin for at least an hour before you commit. Smell it again after you’ve walked around. Only then will you know if you have found your new signature.

PERFUMIER ROJA DOVE

GET YOURSELF A RECOVERY ROUTINE

You have a fitness recovery routine. Why not a skin one? asks Carole Bamford, founder of the namesake beauty and lifestyle label: “Recovery-focused grooming in general is a mindful approach in today’s fast-paced world – supporting the body to repair itself from environmental stressors.”

DON’T SLEEP ON THE DIFFUSER

For more texture, invest in a hairdryer with a diffuser, says Maxwell Oakley of barbershop Supply91. “It mimics air-dried hair, giving you a natural look without making it a bouffant.”

GQ GROOMING PAGES

SWITCH THINGS UP IN THE HAIR DEPARTMENT

Hairstylist Jody Taylor works with the likes of Harris Dickinson, Callum Turner and Emma D’Arcy, so he knows all about finding “your look”. And that can mean taking a risk. “I think sometimes men tend to find a haircut at some point in their life and keep the same style forever,” says Taylor. “That’s so boring – don’t be afraid to mix it up a bit.”

YOU CAN WEAR ANY FRAGRANCE – EVEN IF IT’S “POUR FEMME”

Just like clothing, don’t let gendered labels (or marketing) stop you from wearing a fragrance you’re into. Lyn Harris, the nose behind Perfumer H, says: “Fragrance should be personal – something that defines who you are. If you’re drawn to a particular scent, even if it’s not ‘masculine,’ embrace it.”

DON’T OVERDO HAIR PRODUCT

If you’ve got a new haircut, or you’re trying a new product, it’s easy to get trigger-happy with the pomades, gels, and pastes. This is the very moment that you should remember the “less is more” mantra. Overdo it, and you’re left with a crunchy, greasy lid, which just means extra washing – and no one wants that. You can always add more later if need be.

OLLIE COX, *GQ* STYLE AND WATCHES WRITER

MODELS. (LEFT) ROTEM TUSH AT STORM MODELS; (RIGHT) COURTNEY HARRISON.

YES, YOU *CAN* BE TOO CLEAN

Squeaky-clean skin might feel great, but be warned: overdoing it with the exfoliators and cleansers can dry you out, says renowned facialist Shane Cooper, whose clients include Barry Keoghan and Josh O'Connor. Excessive exfoliating results in red, irritated skin – leading you to think that the tightness and dehyration warrant yet another scrub. "In reality," says Cooper, "it's the opposite: it's about nourishing and protecting the skin barrier, not scrubbing it into submission."

EASE UP ON THE HAIR DYE

As soon as you see those wiry grey hairs sprouting, it's understandable that you might want to reach for the hair dye. But as Sam McKnight, stylist and owner of his own haircare range explains, hitting the right shade makes all the difference. Most guys tend to go a little heavy. Instead, McKnight suggests, "opt for a shade or two lighter if you find it's going too dark."

MAKE SURE YOUR SHOWER ISN'T RUINING YOUR HAIR

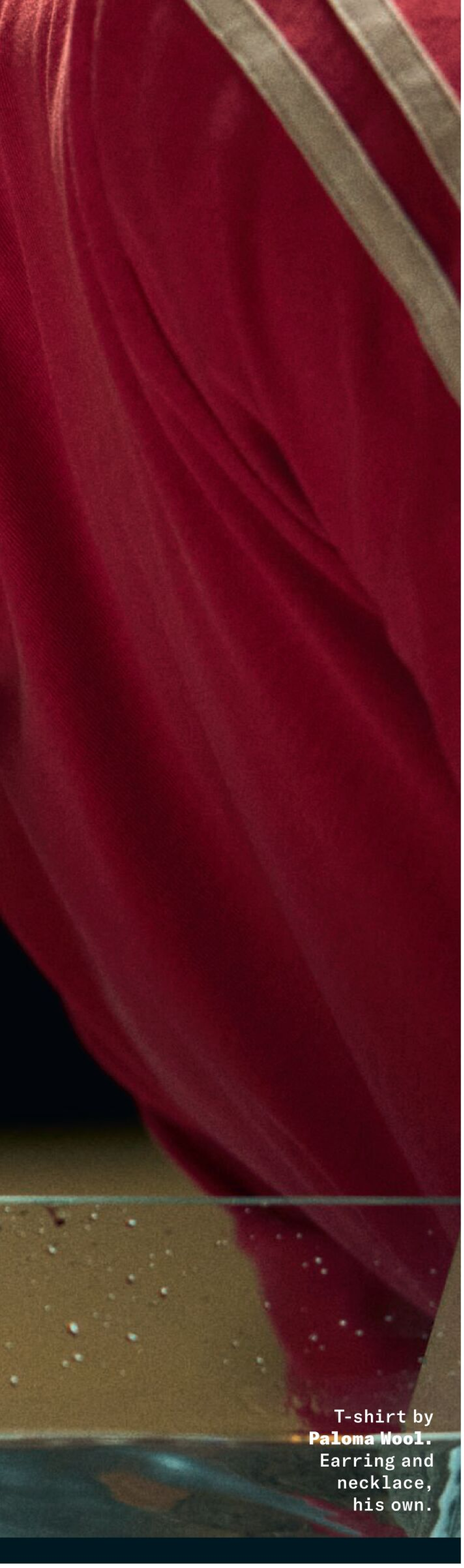
Hayden Cassidy, professional barber and Dior grooming expert, is handy with the clippers. But even before you get to the salon, remember that your hair's health starts in the shower. "Don't forget to protect your scalp from environmental stressors by getting a filter for your shower head," says Cassidy. "Healthy skin and hair will make grooming feel less like a chore and more like a celebration of your natural self."

See our feature on hard water on page 98.

BULK UP BEAUTY SLEEP

Various studies have found that eight hours' kip each night can increase blood flow, rebuild collagen and repair UV damage – all of which can make for better, brighter skin. To help your face rest even easier, use a night mask. Relevant's is packed full of natural hydrators that make you look (and feel) glowier. It saved my skin from chronic dryness, too.

MURRAY CLARK, SENIOR STYLE EDITOR, *GQ*



T-shirt by **Paloma Wool.** Earring and necklace, his own.

YOUR PILLOWCASE COULD BE MAKING YOUR SKIN WORSE

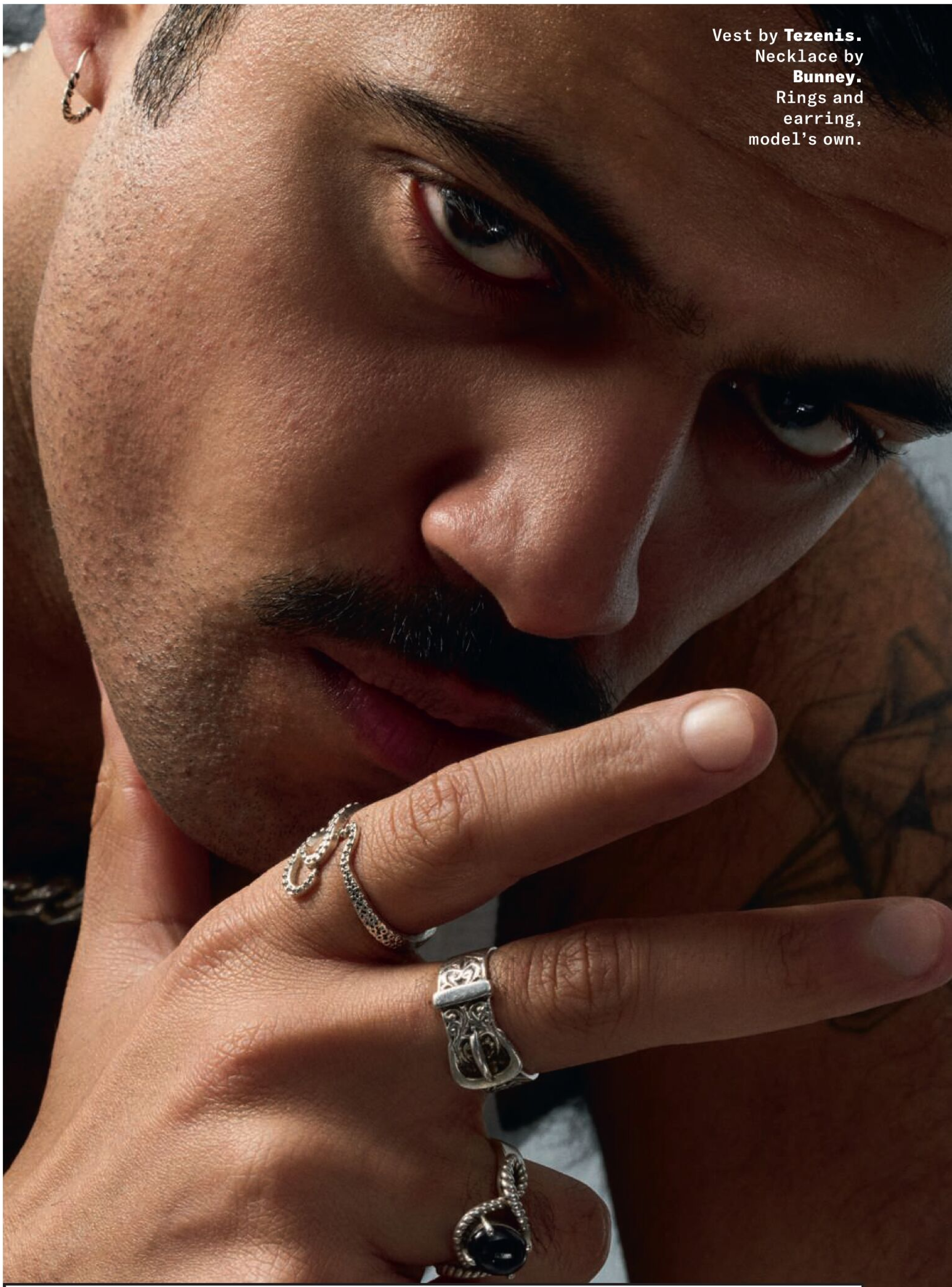
Think about where you lay your head. Your face is on the pillow every night – that's roughly 60 hours a week. Before switching up your entire skincare routine after a breakout, try committing to washing your pillowcases more often. Clean sheets *and* better skin? Good deal.

ANGELO MITAKOS, *GQ* FASHION EDITOR

MODELS, (ABOVE) JOSEPH LAWRENCE, MUSICIAN; (RIGHT) AADAM SHEIKH, ARTIST.

KEEP YOUR BROWS IN CHECK

As you age, your hair can start doing some strange new things – especially eyebrows. Brendan Murdock, founder of hair label Murdock London and apothecary Anatomē, advocates for a "light plucking" as we get older: "When gents experience andropause – a more subtle hormonal change than a woman experiences – we find our energy levels change and we grow more hair in odd places. Keep it under control." But for those who haven't yet reached their blessed 40s and 50s? "Restraint is best."



Vest by **Tezenis.** Necklace by **Bunney.** Rings and earring, model's own.

YOUR NAILS ARE ALWAYS ON SHOW. ACT LIKE IT

You should become best friends with cuticle oil. Not only does it hydrate and soften your cuticles (the thin skin around the nail), but it also stops that pang of shame you feel when you've got flaky, cracked skin on your hands.

ITUNU OKE, *GQ STYLE* PROJECTS EDITOR

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John Rawlings, May 15, 1954, Vogue

THAT CRAZY LIGHT MASK WILL DO YOU WONDERS

Those sci-fi light masks look goofy, we know, but they work. According to pro facialist Adeela Crown, they can help you look (and feel) younger. “Invest in the Darth Vader mask. I’m serious,” Adeela tells *GQ*. “LED masks utilise the penetrative wavelength depth of red light to stimulate collagen, blue light to neutralise bacteria, and near-infrared to reduce inflammation and scarring.”

LED mask by **CurrentBody.**

MODEL, ROTEM TUSH AT STORM MODELS.

STOP STEALING YOUR GIRL'S PRODUCTS

A borrowed cleanser doesn't become you. Dr Yannis Alexandrides, London-based plastic surgeon and founder of the skincare label 111Skin, thinks it's time to find a routine of your own. "It starts with identifying your skin type and choosing products tailored to address your specific needs," he says. "It's important not to copy others (aka whatever your partner is using). Men's skin has different characteristics and requires different ingredients for best results."

Sunglasses by **Gentle Monster.** Eye patches by **111Skin.**

THE BEST SKIN IS ALL YOURS

For Dr Suha Kersh, the aesthetic specialist behind 23MD, "regeneration is the buzzword for men's skincare in 2025". She's seen an uptick in treatments such as polynucleotides and Profhilo, which "refresh the skin but also work at a cellular level to promote longevity in skin health. The result is hydrated, fortified, and rejuvenated skin that looks and feels its best."

BOOK YOURSELF IN FOR A SERVICE

If you're not into skincare, upkeep can feel like a chore. Dr David Jack's advice is to think about it like maintenance: "Investing in professional treatments two or three times a year can be very helpful for tackling early signs of ageing and uneven tone – a bit like servicing a car." Laser resurfacing or Morpheus8 (microneedling) help to tighten and smooth the skin, prolonging your baby face.

YOU'RE (VERY LIKELY) OVERDOING THE SHAMPOO

It feels good to duck your head under the warm drench of a shower and give your hair a scrub. But hairstylist Charlie Cullen is rallying against it (or at least, that's what he tells clients Harry Lawtey, Asa Butterfield and Murray Bartlett). Overwashing can make your hair limp and flat. "Generally speaking, longer hair and hair with a wavy or curly texture benefit from some of the natural oils produced by the scalp," he says. "This helps moisturise the hair and avoids unnecessary volume which can happen with that freshly washed look."

EMBRACE AN UPGRADE TO YOUR FADE

For those with curly or coily hair, there are updates to be had for the classics, says stylist Marcia Lee: "For men of colour, the fade remains iconic, but it's evolving with creative twists like the burst fade or shadow fade, paired with longer natural curls on top." For inspiration, look to the lids of Marcus Rashford and Odell Beckham Jr.

ALWAYS READ THE INSTRUCTIONS

One common mistake is not properly distributing product. A little goes a long way – applying it evenly can make a big difference to the final result.

LUKE DAVIES, SUPPLY 91 BARBER SHOP

MODEL, JOSEPH LAWRENCE.

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PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR DENTAL REGIME

You've levelled up your skincare, why leave your dental routine in the pharmacy aisle? Investing in a luxe enamel-bleaching toothpaste, along with a good mouthwash, will make whitening your chompers feel like a ritual, not a chore. The excellent Selahatin range swaps regular mint flavours for gourmet combos like bitter orange and grapefruit.

MAHALIA CHANG,
GQ STYLE EDITOR

Grills, model's own.

MODEL, MWATHI GAKONGA AT PREMIER MODELS.

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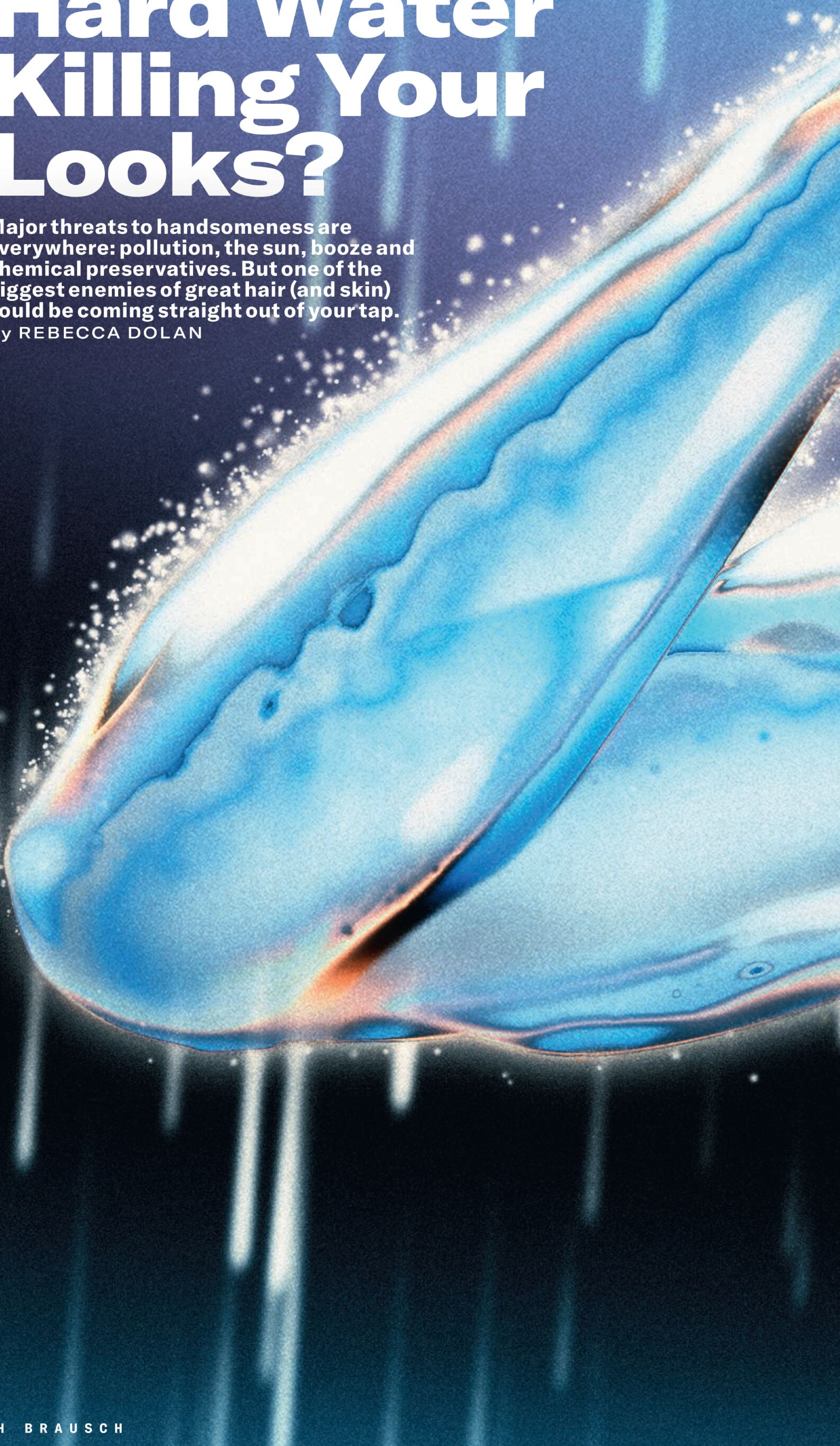
Is Britain’s Hard Water Killing Your Looks?

Major threats to handsomeness are everywhere: pollution, the sun, booze and chemical preservatives. But one of the biggest enemies of great hair (and skin) could be coming straight out of your tap.

By REBECCA DOLAN



When I moved to London from New York, my hair started falling out. In chunks. It wasn’t because I was particularly stressed (this was late-stage pandemic, and my commute was from bed to sofa), nor was I attempting a rebrand with a bottle of bleach. After a few months of shedding, my layers were looking more like a micro-fringe. My first response was to panic, then scream-type into Google. Scrolling through hundreds of Reddit comments and TikTok rants from other glowed-down transplants, I discovered there was a name for my troubles: hard water.

Water’s hardness refers to the amount of dissolved magnesium and calcium it contains. As hard water evaporates, mineral deposits are left behind, leaving a stubborn, chalky residue. It looks perfectly innocent coming out of the tap, but it leads to that unappetising film of limescale in your kettle and off white splatters on your glassware. And as hard water afflicts about 70 per cent of the UK, many of us pour this same mineral-rich liquid over our hair and skin every day.

“My hair has just been wrecked being here,” writes one Redditor, new to London. “As soon as I go back home, my hair starts cooperating again and springs right back to being healthy.” Another user, after spending four-and-a-half years in hard-water hell: “My hair has changed drastically in appearance. I would now call it thin, lifeless, and dull.” Obsession with hard water is a weird, wild slice of the looks-maxxing internet. The capital’s water is particularly hated in this corner of the web. The complaints go on:

“I moved from Cornwall to London two years ago – for the first couple of weeks my skin was peeling from my hands and feet.”

“Actually stopped using the water on my face.”

The hard-water-curious crew is growing: Google searches for the term doubled between 2019 and 2023. Tap water more generally hit the wider news more in the last year (see Thames Water’s bankruptcy scares and in the US, RFK Jr’s war against fluoride). But some recent interest has also come from the ever-expanding and increasingly science-y canon of hair content on Instagram, TikTok and Reddit, where users document their 12-step #everythingshower, conduct hair porosity tests, or, in one fun trend, count every single strand lost on hair wash day.

In 2023, when content creator Ben Fearnley moved from Sydney to London, he soon noticed his skin getting drier. His friends filled him

ILLUSTRATIONS BY NICO H BRAUSCH

in on the hard water predicament. "I don't think I'd ever thought about it [in Sydney]," says Fearnley. His hair was also feeling the effects. "I am someone with thick, curly hair, so I was very much like, What is going on?"

BLAMING TAP WATER for messing up good looks feels like peak online quackery. But a 2022 study found that adults in hard water areas were more likely to have eczema. Other studies showed a similar link in babies, such as a King's College report suggesting three-month-olds had an up to 87 per cent increased risk of eczema if they lived in a hard water area.

James Jun, 33, a fitness coach, started reading up on hard water when his acne wouldn't clear up. "I thought it could be diet. I thought it could be humidity," he says. "I tried a bunch of different products, different cleansers. Then I wondered if it was the water."

Jun added a quick rinse with distilled water at the end of his skincare regime and the inflammation on his face cleared up in days, his breakouts drastically reduced. Turns out, he didn't actually need the long list of specialised products. There aren't any scientific studies directly linking hard water to acne – many people, like Jun, just solve their problems via anecdotes they find online.

Water companies measure hardness by the concentration of calcium carbonate, a byproduct of dissolved calcium reacting with bicarbonate ions in water. Hard water isn't a uniquely British problem, but this beautiful country, slathered in limestone (aka calcium carbonate), is notorious for it. The US designates anything more than 180mg/l calcium carbonate in water as "very hard," while for Thames Water, that threshold is a hefty 300mg/l. The southeast of England has some of the hardest water in the country, even if parts of Scotland and Wales enjoy water that is baby-soft.

To be clear, this country has some of the world's cleanest tap water, scoring a number one in Yale's Environmental Performance Index. Because hard water isn't considered a health risk, there's no legal limit in the UK, EU or US for water hardness.

Some campaign groups have tried to put hard water on the government's agenda, pointing out that limescale can reduce energy efficiency, but so far, there's been no response. As one water treatment company argued in evidence to Parliament, utility companies are "either scant in their coverage of hard water at best, or at worst, remiss by completely omitting this important factor in their content." Upshot: Big Water doesn't care about your frizzy hair.

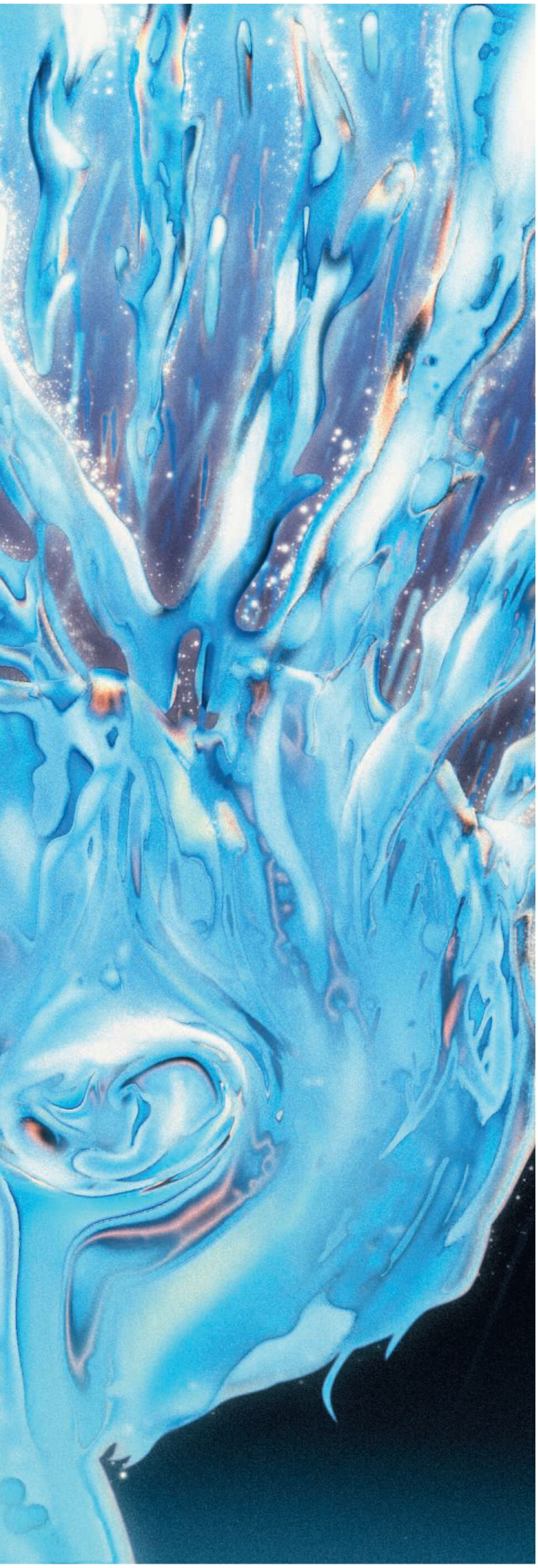
One of the telltale signs of hard water is that it feels harder to really scrub yourself clean. Dissolved magnesium and calcium react with most soaps to form a scum. "You need more soap to form lather," says Dr Diego Lopez of the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, the first author of a 2022 study on hard water and eczema. "If you need more soap or more energetic scrubbing to generate lather to make you feel that you're clean, that can also be irritating."

The more you try to scrub up, the more scum you'll layer on. For some, lingering side-effects can be solved with a moisturising cleanser. Others, like Jun, have bigger issues. Some research suggests that the residue from hard water can break down the skin barrier, which is perhaps why people complain about dry and itchy skin. "If you apply make-up in a hard water area as opposed to a soft water one, it will look different… [some people] notice a difference in colour," says Dr Sadequr Rahman, a former practitioner in Harley Street who now runs his own clinic in Wales (and who avoided drinking tap water in London).

Then there are the hair problems. A 2018 study of 70 men found that their hair strength was significantly weaker when exposed to hard water. It's another catch-22 situation. Hard water's mineral deposits can build up on the scalp and strands of hair, making it harder for products to fully penetrate. Enjoy long, hot showers? Then you're likely making the situation worse, as the irritating effects of hot water compound mineral-related issues. Breakage, greasiness, dryness, split ends, colour fade, frizz, dullness: the list of hard water's damage to hair goes on.

THE HOLY GRAIL of hard-water fixes is a home softening system, which uses ion exchange to replace magnesium and calcium with softer ions like sodium. One of the most popular

> "My acne wouldn't clear up. I thought it could be diet or humidity, so I tried different products and cleansers. Then I wondered if it was the water."
> —JAMES JUN



brands is Culligan Harvey, founded in the '70s by a Cornishman after he moved to the hard water area of Surrey. Most softeners will usually set you back £500—£1,000, if not more, and require a plumber to install, so they won't suit everyone. And for some, the addition of salt can be irritating as well. "The technology continues to develop," says Dr Lopez. "New technologies can remove minerals from the water, but these are still expensive. I think we will see some improvements in this area in the next few years."

I tried rinsing my hair after a shower with the softest bottled water (Fiji) I could find, and the difference was immediate: my hair felt less stiff, brittle, and cleaner. When I did a quick at-home test, my shower water was way harder than bottled. Is this an affordable or environmentally conscious solution? Absolutely not. Even more elite than softened or bottled is distilled water, which contains no ions of any kind (your average Evian, for example, has a whopping 80mg/l of calcium, among other minerals). On the r/distilledwaterhair subreddit, users obsess over the logistical nightmare of pulling this off: you can buy a machine to distil around four litres of water at a time, and then use a handheld shower, camping style, to wash your hair. You'd be sacrificing a significant chunk of your day at the altar of a 10-minute rinse.

A few startups have entered the scene with filters and heads that you can attach to your shower. These can't actually fully soften your water (that requires a much bulkier system), but they can filter out some metals. Hello Klean launched its first shower filter in 2019, setting up shop in Berlin before moving to London. "We started to get amazing traction in the UK because a lot of expats live here," says co-founder Karlee Ozener, who grew up in Canada. She launched the company after getting recurring red patches on her legs and feet when she was in certain cities, such as Berlin and London. "The water [here] is really not our friend." In the US, meanwhile, Canopy launched a filtered shower head last year that claims to "support healthy skin and hair."

Hello Klean's shower head claims to filter out some chlorine, copper, iron and lead. The build-up of these minerals don't do great things for your hair (copper and iron can distort colour, while chlorine can be dehydrating), so reducing them is a step in the right direction. But since water hardness is down to calcium and magnesium, anyone who wants to soften up will need more help.

This is where products come in. Hard water is typically alkaline, which can disrupt pH levels in skin and hair. Acidic products can help offset this. In one study on hair strength, yoghurt and lemon helped minimise some of the damage from hard water. A more practical option, loved by Redditors, is diluted apple cider vinegar, which can balance scalp and hair pH. Brands like Hello Klean and Fekkai have caught on to the cider vinegar trick, including the ingredient in scalp soaks and rinses. This thinking also applies to skincare. "You want to encourage a slightly acidic regime for your skin," says Rahman. "You've got the secondary benefit that acidity on the skin in mild amounts is better for skin turnover and improvement." A product with salicylic acid, such as Paula's Choice exfoliant, or CeraVe's smoothing cleanser, can work wonders.

"There's this huge wave of promotion of scalp health," says Heather King, a stylist at Ena Salon in London. Not all of the buzzy new scalp products are explicitly aimed at people in hard water areas, but these treatments claim to clear mineral build-up. If you live in a city like London, you should aim to do a "detox shampoo" once a week, according to King, or at least, "anytime you descale your kettle." Stick to products that both moisturise and repair, so you're not stripping your hair of its natural oils, making dryness and brittleness worse.

Some brands now go the extra mile and offer intensive scalp treatments in salons. In 2022, K18 released its Peptide Prep Pro chelating hair complex, a four-minute demineralisation of hair. For £190, the Cloud Twelve spa in London's Notting Hill offers a 70-minute, 17-step treatment that gets you a full head MOT, including a before-and-after scalp close-up to appreciate how much gunk you've sloughed off.

My battle plan against the tap is constantly evolving. Water hardness can change too, so a beauty regime that works in summer is likely not enough to stave off that seaweed-hair feeling in winter. My current ride-or-die staple includes a diluted apple cider vinegar rinse, filtered water and super-thick conditioners. But as soon as I've saved up my pennies, I'm ditching the seven-step routine and getting a water softener – landlord be damned.

REBECCA DOLAN *is* **BRITISH GQ***'s associate features editor.*

STEP INTO Mr. Affleck's OFFICE

Since founding a production company with a genuinely radical vision, Ben Affleck has chosen to make films as an executive first, a director second, and an actor third. But can you really just stop being one of the biggest film stars on earth?

BY ZACH BARON
PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREGORY HARRIS
STYLED BY GEORGE CORTINA

From the window of the conference room at Artists Equity, Ben Affleck's production company, you can see Los Angeles spread out for miles to the south – the Pacific Ocean to the right, Downtown to the left, birds gently flying over everything in between. It's a Monday in January, not quite two weeks after fires first began to sweep over the city, and the birds are oddly calming: the first few tentative signs of life returning. Affleck – tall, a little rumpled, extending a large mitt of a hand – is as jittery as the rest of us, though largely unscathed, despite reports to the contrary. "I noticed that there's been stories about me," he says, almost apologetically. "My house burning down and all these various things." His house did not burn down, in fact, nor did the one he rents down the block from that house, though like many, he had to leave for a little bit. But he is used to having to clear stuff like this up. "I was thinking to myself that this person's impression" – meaning mine – "of my week is probably formed by three *Daily Mail* articles that are mostly absurd."

Affleck first became widely known with 1997's *Good Will Hunting,* which he wrote and starred in alongside his friend Matt Damon. He is nearing his 30th uninterrupted year in the spotlight, which has given him a career and two Academy Awards, and also a level of tabloid scrutiny that in its consistency and vehemence is almost unmatched. "Some people like to follow the soap opera," Affleck says. "And that soap opera is actually independent of a movie you might make or be in. They're interested in just the general soap opera and you became a character in that soap opera. You don't write it, you don't direct it, you don't even know you're in it, but you are."

This soap opera has provided Affleck with a backstory that is almost classical in its shape: sudden rise, dramatic fall (2003's *Gigli,* co-starring Affleck's then and future love interest Jennifer Lopez, is usually cited here), gradual comeback – primarily as a director, with 2007's *Gone Baby Gone,* 2010's *The Town,* and 2012's *Argo,* which won the best picture Oscar – and then rise again, like the phoenix tattoo that was once grainily photographed on his bare back. None of this is exactly right, though all of it has elements of truth, and Affleck has been shadowboxing with this version of himself, the soap opera character version, for most of his adult life. To this day, he still meets people who assume he is his dim, rock-breaking character from *Good Will Hunting,* a movie that cast Damon in the genius role ("Matt's maths skills, I am pretty sure, are very far from genius level"), or the attention-plagued playboy that was his public role in the first decade of this century.

In reality, Affleck is 52, a twice-divorced father of three who commutes to an office most days. "I'm a middle-aged guy," he says, not unhappily. Despite the comeback narrative that journalists still reference, week to week and year to year, he has long been ensconced in the very top levels of Hollywood as a leading man (in the lobby of Artists Equity there is, among other things, Affleck's old Batman suit) and, more recently, an executive. Affleck founded Artists Equity, which he runs with Damon and Gerry Cardinale, a little over two years ago, with the idea of wresting back some control from the notoriously opaque and complex studio financing system. *Air* (2023), the last film Affleck directed, was an Artists Equity film; so is *The Accountant 2,* the sequel to the improbably successful 2016 action film, which Affleck stars in and is in cinemas in April.

Throughout all of it, Affleck has retained what I can only describe as his humanity. He is a former Sexiest Man Alive who is also routinely caught on camera dropping packages or spilling coffee. He is still, despite years of being burned by a celebrity-industrial complex that has never left him alone, incredibly honest and talkative in front of an interviewer. At the end of our first conversation, he almost apologises for how much he's been speaking – "I mean, I feel like I'm not a great interview in some ways because I'll just talk about whatever you bring up." That last part is true.

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PREVIOUS PAGE
suit
Richard James Savile Row
shirt
Tom Ford
tie
Scabal
pocket square
Henry Poole & Co
shoes
John Lobb
socks
Turnbull & Asser
glasses
Jacques Marie Mage
vintage watch (throughout) from
Foundwell

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OPPOSITE PAGE
jumper
NN.07 at Mr Porter
shirt and socks
Turnbull & Asser
trousers
Anderson & Sheppard
shoes
Christian Louboutin
sunglasses
Maison Bonnet
vintage ring (throughout) from
Foundwell

GQ: Speaking of tabloids, one story I read this week, was that the FBI visited your house.

BEN AFFLECK: Good example. As it turns out, the FBI did, in fact, visit my house. But this is pretty revealing, right? So I come home and I see there's a story with sources that say, "Hey, the FBI was at your house." I'm like, "Well, this is strange." So I call them and say, "Hey, FBI, were you at my house? Do you want to talk to me?" "Oh, we don't know." I get transferred along. Finally somebody who is actually responsible for what was happening was like, "Oh, we had no idea that was your house." There was a break-in of a federal official's home in that area. So the FBI went around and whoever lived there, the FBI rang their bell, but because there are photographers sitting outside and these guys have their FBI jackets on, then it's: the FBI has visited your house. Whoever wrote the story made up something about how it was related to an investigation about a drone that I guess did crash into one of the helicopters two or three miles up Mandeville Canyon. Turns out, no, it wasn't about that. In fact, we were very far from where the drone was. So it's like: you've seen this event about the FBI at my house. I had no idea. My only involvement was to track it down, figure it out.

Does it still feel odd to you that some stranger will show up in front of you and be like, *I know you got a FedEx package yesterday?*

I'm aware that it's absurd and it's ridiculous. There's nothing newsworthy at all about the day-to-day events of my life or the conversation I have with one person or another person that's photographed. And often it's like the big trick is to say *So-and-so*

does this amid that, imply some correlation between the two. In other words, some broad event is taking place in some way, whether globally or around this person's life. And look, here they are frustrated with the parking meter. I'm definitely aware of the cosmic joke of it all. What I've ended up focusing on is: look, I know what's going on in my life. And also, really more importantly, my kids know. We used to have a thing, my ex-wife and I, when they would see something on a supermarket stand, we would say, well, "You know this isn't always true because if it were, you would have 15 brothers or sisters or whatever the number of stories is where they said that your mom was pregnant." And I'm really lucky that I have a really good co-parent and partner in Jennifer Garner, the kids' mom, who's wonderful and great and we work together well. It's more of a headache than anything else and there certainly are worse things. I have yet to figure out *why* I'm an object of –

You don't have a theory?
I think I don't present in a very careful way. So I'll go out and pick up the packages or deliveries and I don't really care that people are there to take my picture. And some people are probably, I guess you'd call them smarter or more strategic because they think, well: "I don't want to be seen wearing some T-shirt or spilling some drink." And I just think: Oh fuck it, man, I could give a shit. I just want to get the coffee. So maybe that's a part of it, because people are accustomed to a more presented, curated image. My life is actually pretty drama-free. And so even if I have the same events that people have – I'm sure in your mind you're thinking, Oh, well, you just got divorced. That's not drama-free. And I understand that instinct, but all of this is pretty adult, and for all the sensational stuff that gets written, if somebody sat down and talked to me about it, and I said, "Well, this is really the experience," their eyes would glaze over with boredom.

Do you know what I'm actually thinking about right now? You did just get divorced from Jennifer Lopez. And there is a scene in a documentary she put out last year called *The Greatest Love Story Never Told* – really, there's more than one scene, actually; the entire premise of the film is, she's like: "We're private people, but we have public dimensions as artists and I'm about to put a lot of us out there." And you're on camera, and your face as this is revealed to you is – and I'm only guessing – but it looks like you're taking a deep breath, like, *Oh fuck, here we go again.* But also: *I love and support this person.*
Part of it was, "OK, if I'm going to participate in this, I want to try to do it in an honest way and in a way that's interesting." Because I thought it was an interesting examination. Like I mentioned to you before, there are a lot of people who I think have handled celebrity more adeptly and more adroitly than I have, Jennifer among them. My temperament is to be a little bit more reserved and private than hers. As happens in relationships, you don't always have the same attitude towards these things. And so I thought, Oh, this is interesting because how do you reconcile that? Because exactly what you said is true. I love and support this person. I believe in them. They're great. I want people to see that. And I think the thing that I said in that documentary or the piece that they used was where I said, *You don't marry a ship's captain and then say, "Well, I don't like going out in the water."* You've got to own what you knew going into any relationship. And I think it's important to say that wasn't the cause of some major fracture. It's not like you can watch that documentary and go, "Oh, now I understand the issues that these two had."

We're sitting in the conference room of your production company, Artists Equity. Do you actually 9-to-5 it here?
I do. The reason that I first did this was because I recognised that the most important thing to me was both being a parent and being present, and that for my own sake, going off to Austin or Louisiana or somewhere to do some movie, I was really missing time I could never get back. My kids were 8, 11, and 14, and I felt like: I don't want to miss any of this time at all. And so I thought, well, Let me figure out a way to work at home and have the kind of job where I can actually be here and build my schedule around that.

Have you ever taken any time off in your career?
Not on purpose. We were formed by our experiences, right? I remember struggling to be an actor, and just those years seem bigger and longer than they are. It was a fraction of my life at this point. But in my teenage years, early 20s, all that time where you don't know if it's ever going to work, or is anyone going to give me a chance? Really, my ambition was just not to have to say, well, "I'm an actor, a filmmaker, writer-slash-waiter," but to actually get to do that job for a living. And I think when I first had the opportunity to work and for, I don't know, 15 years or something after that, I was more afraid that I wouldn't get the opportunity if I stopped moving.

Your father wanted to be a writer and a director as well, and it didn't work out for him. Do you think that feeling of not ever wanting to stop is somehow related to the way you grew up?
I'm sure it is. My father had ambitions to be an actor and to be a director and to be a writer. And my experience in my childhood was of knowing and seeing a father, when he was around, that I believe at the time was plagued by a sense of not having accomplished what he wanted. He was a car mechanic and bartender and a janitor and a head of the custodial team at a college and stuff. And so I definitely am aware of that fact, and I've talked about this with other actors who come from environments where they feel like there was a parent that couldn't do it, you know what I mean? And that felt insecure. It's a lot harder for those people to turn things down. And ironically, the ability to say no, it's a real paradox in this business, but the ability to say no is actually much more useful.

You started Artists Equity two and a half years ago. The theory was: everyone shares risk, everyone shares reward. How have people done so far?

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turtleneck
Tom Ford
trousers
Cifonelli
shoes
Christian Louboutin
socks
Turnbull & Asser
glasses
Jacques Marie Mage

We're doing really well. Part of the fundamental thesis of this company was: the artists, the director, the actors, they're going to get a broader freedom to spend the money in a way that they think maximally benefits the movie. The downside is you also have to take some of the responsibilities. If it goes over budget, well, that eats into your ownership. My belief was this is going to really align incentives in a way that's going to be healthier for everybody… The crews' rates, the last time we looked, were about 15 per cent higher than their highest quotes because we do a bonusing system. So if you're a crew, and we've had a couple of different models that we've experimented with, but the first was sort of like: "Here's our goals, and if we reach them, there's extra compensation in it for everybody on the crew. You'll get additional bonus." It creates a more collaborative experience.

What do you think the future of the company is?
I feel like, OK, now we've delivered a lot of production that we've done and we've delivered a lot of movies and we have a bunch the public hasn't seen but that I feel really good about what we're about to deliver, and a bunch that we're about to start production on. So in that sense, I feel like that's step one. Step two, we have a data project that we're sort of integrating –

This is referring to AI? You are seemingly one of the few people in the industry to be like: "I'm open to the idea."
No, actually – when I talk about AI, I'm really talking in broad terms about what we need to do as an industry. I myself am not personally doing AI, obviously, but I am really looking very closely at what this is going to mean for this business and this art form. The first time I saw it, I felt terrified. I thought, We're going to be destroyed. What we do is clearly just being duplicated here and, oh my gosh, we spend all this energy and time and commitment and going out and filming stories and trying to bring them to life, and here the computer can sort of do this with a keystroke. And what I learned is you actually really can't do that with a keystroke. And, in fact, what we do is probably more resistant to disintermediation by AI than most other businesses, frankly, and most other jobs. But also that it actually should be a useful tool. Part of my eagerness around it is because I really would like to participate in defining, for example, the residual streams that I know are going to accompany this. If they're not defined now, it'll be much harder to do it.

An example I've heard you use was, OK, well, people can sort of do their own episode of *Succession.* And I was like, well, that seems dark and dystopian to me.
Now, if you're on *Succession,* and this is where the guilds I think should negotiate for, you should have the ability on any show, whatever, to say: "I want to opt out of being regenerated." Because what that means is, well, I may not have said that line or done that. I'm not comfortable with that, but also

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jumper
Gucci
shirt
Tom Ford
shorts
Todd Snyder
trainers
Adidas
socks
Polo Ralph Lauren
sunglasses
Maison Bonnet

you have to say, if I opt in, I should be compensated alongside everyone else who's making money from this because I'm OK with it. You should be able to dictate that, and there should be clearly delineated residual structures that compensate people for that.

So if someone came to you and was like, "I'm doing the *Good Will Hunting* cinematic universe, and I want the rights to young Matt and young Ben," what would you say?
I wouldn't necessarily be comfortable with that, although, I don't know. No one's ever asked me that. So I'm not sure. It also feels weird because that movie feels connected to a time when that wasn't possible. But you've seen people's estates sell and, frankly, great – if your beneficiaries want to sell your likeness to do voiceovers for Visa or something, I don't know, who am I to say? Go knock yourself out. I'll be gone. So if it's still worth something to my grandkids, go ahead and sell it.

There's something interesting about hearing you in executive mode, and then industry-prophet mode, and then to think about you going to work on *The Accountant 2* set as a working actor. Is there a push/pull there?
When I got into this – and I wanted to be a director, and I had directed short films and was trying to write and obviously be an actor – it was a time when this sort of DIY thing was just starting. You had Cassavetes, you had independent filmmakers, but the '90s is when you had *Reservoir Dogs* and *Clerks* and *Slacker* and [1989's] *Do the Right Thing,* and there were these movies that were made by people outside of what they call the studio system. And they were interesting and they were ambitious. And what I learned about when I was coming up and had ambitions to start doing this was, "Oh look, if you get Harvey Keitel to do your movie, you can get a million dollars and you can make *Reservoir Dogs*." So even writing *Good Will Hunting,* we always had to keep in mind all these commercial concerns. We thought, Well, it's not going to be a very expensive movie, because no one's going to invest in an expensive movie with us in it, so it's going to be a small movie that takes place in the rooms and streets of Boston and doesn't have all those other high-production-value costs associated with it. And we need to have a movie star, otherwise no one's going to make it. And so with the movie-star part, we have to make that a supporting part so they don't have to work as many weeks, but give them all the great monologues and speeches. And so the corporate-mode thing, in terms of thinking about the relationship between what you're creating and what it costs and how you're going to get it out to people, has always been part of the way I thought about it.

Matt Damon, with whom you wrote *Good Will Hunting*, is an interesting counterpoint to you in the sense that he has rarely seemed to want to do anything other than act.
As much as I want to be an actor, I find it most satisfying directing movies. Now, I thought you were going to compare our acting careers, to which I would've said, well, Matt learned and knew earlier than I did to really key in on the director as the fundamental basis on which he's going to make a decision whether to do a movie or not, which was a very wise choice. And also he has certainly had opportunities to do movies that like – it's not like I was saying, "No, Scorsese, no, Spielberg, I'm not going to be in your movie." We're in situations of our opportunities, and we're subject to that.

What pulls you back to acting at this point?
I really feel like I started liking my work the most when I arrived at a point of, I could kind of take it or leave it. Where directing became a central focus, and I just thought, well, I'm going to act in things that I just really love.

Why do you think it took you so long to get to that place?
Late bloomer.

Really?
Actually, yeah, in some ways. I think also I'm kind of in awe of actors who can generate the sense of life experience that they haven't had. That's not a gift that I have. I think I am able, as an actor at best, to take the sort of fragments of experiences that I've had that have had big impacts on me and reassemble them in ways that kind of suit the needs of the character that I'm playing.

I was reflecting on the fact that you are maybe not thought of as a very personal actor, but that there is a lot of your life in roles you've taken, whether *Good Will*

***Hunting,* which has some of your dad in it, or *Hollywoodland* and *Gone Girl,* which are kind of about fame and reckoning with the spotlight, or more recently, *The Way Back,* in which you played an alcoholic.**
A lot of those later on became evident, maybe more evident. And I knew with *The Way Back,* like, "OK, look, people know I'm an alcoholic or in recovery, I'm going to have to have a conversation about this." I didn't really mind that. I maybe underestimated the degree to which – I didn't have any ambitions to be the national spokesman for recovering alcoholics. And not because I have any shame with it or anything. I just find that, I've been sober for more than five years, it's just not something that is at the forefront of my mind. It's not the central preoccupation of my life. But at the time, it was something that I was definitely wrestling with and thinking about. And also I was totally aware that my own lived experience meant that I was able to bring something to it that I thought would make it feel more real and connect with people more. Now, I hadn't lost a child, thank God, which is what really was at the core of that story, and I can't imagine anything worse than that in life. So it is both. It is a combination. You bring some things to it and you have to imagine others.

If I could have, I would've kept the fact that I'm sober anonymous, because I think it works better that way. And I didn't ask for that to become something people knew about. But I can't complain about it either. I understood doing this job and doing this life, if something happened like that, people were going to know about it, and they did. And I have arrived at a place where I think of that experience as part of my life in authentically grateful ways, whereas I didn't think such a thing was possible before. So that sort of is what it is.

A FEW DAYS LATER, Affleck and I meet again, this time in his office at Artists Equity, where a cabinet holds two Oscars next to the distinctive popcorn shape of an MTV Movie Award. Some of the fire-related tabloid storm around him has subsided, and he seems more at ease. Or maybe it's just the majestic cardigan from Brunello Cucinelli that he's wearing. "Very elite, very fashion-forward," he says, self-deprecatingly.

How's the last conversation sitting?
Well, on the one hand there's the first feeling, which is like, well, I hope I was clear about, when you asked me about Jen and the documentary and I talked about that and my sort of personal life a little bit, which I don't mind doing as long as my actual feelings and intentions and beliefs are communicated, which I hope I was clear that really this is somebody I have a lot of respect for. And I get wanting to divine or explore the kind of differences in perspective that we have in terms of how a person feels comfortable approaching the line between public and private life. But I really hope that whatever you use doesn't suggest that I have any negativity or judgment or anything regarding that. I have nothing but respect. I guess there's a tendency to look at breakups and want to identify root causes or something. But honestly, like I said, the truth is much more quotidian than probably people would believe or would be interesting.

Quotidian in the sense that there's not some major thing?
Yeah, there's no scandal, no soap opera, no intrigue. The truth is, when you talk to somebody, "Hey, what happened?" Well, there is no: "This is what happened." It's just a story about people trying to figure out their lives and relationships in ways that we all sort of normally do. And as you get older, this is true for me, I assume it's true for most people, there is no "So-and-so did this" or "This was the big event." It's really, it sounds more like a couple's therapy session, which – you would tune out of someone else's couple's therapy after a while. For one thing, you start going, "OK, clearly this person has got *these* issues. Clearly they have *these* issues." And the reason I don't want to share that is just sort of embarrassing. It feels vulnerable.

I was thinking about our last conversation, and I think one reason you are asked so frequently about tabloid stuff is that you speak really well about it – like you've clearly thought hard about that world and your place in it.
It's because I've been forced into analysing it to try to figure it out, to understand: what is it? Because naturally you go, like, "OK, maybe I'll just wear the same outfit every single day, so the pictures won't be distinguishable." Or maybe: "I'll just look like a slob," and I'm like, nope – then you become the sad Affleck meme spilling the coffee. Which I have to say I think is kind of funny. So I think it's just a function of the fact that I've spent time thinking about really trying to figure it out.

You're 52. When you do a movie like *The Accountant 2* now, are you like, "I only have so many more action movies left in me"?
Physically? Yes, definitely. I used to be very gung ho about like, "Oh, I'll do the fights, I'll do the stunts." And now I am very much, "At what point is the stunt performer going to come in and do this?" Part of it's because I know they're just better at it than I am, and you want somebody who looks good doing it. From a totally selfish perspective, you just get banged up and tired. It's one of the things I was talking to Matt about – he's going off to do this Chris Nolan movie [*The Odyssey*] and doing a lot of stunt rehearsal, and it was kind of like, *Boy, it's been a while, hasn't it?* Where you really have to go and learn the fights – this is *Bourne Identity* kind of territory.

But why I think *The Accountant* was interesting to me – one, I really like fusing drama about characters that are interesting to me, with genres and storytelling tropes that are familiar to the audience and viewed as more commercial. And actually it turns out the audience has, there's a bigger audience and they're more patient around some of the dramatic-character stuff that interests me if it comes with a gear shift into more high-stakes visual stuff like that. And *The Accountant* is very much in keeping with that in the sense that it's really kind of an interesting character story about this guy and his brother who are unusual characters.

You're a student of Hollywood careers – do you think about your own?
I think about my acting career as a kind of strange outlier. I think I'm really lucky that I was able to do it for long enough to get to a place where I started to feel really good about it and it started to be really fun. I needed to do it a bunch first. And I look back on movies in a pretty objective way now from when I was younger. Like maybe *Good Will Hunting,* or *Shakespeare in Love,* or there's a *Boiler Room* or *Changing Lanes* where I'm like, "Oh, that was good. That guy, he didn't really know what the fuck he was doing but managed to do some stuff that was good." There's stuff that I'm not proud of and I think, Oh, this is just horrendous. What was I doing? So I'm lucky personally that I was able to hang around. I think of my career as having two basic arcs in a way where it could have really gone away for me entirely. And directing sort of helped me resurrect that. And it also made me smarter and more careful and more thoughtful.

You mentioned having to resurrect your career, which was around 2003–2005, when you had a bunch of acting roles that didn't work and hadn't yet directed *Gone Baby Gone.* But it feels like 20 years on, the person in my seat is still trying to plot your location on some sort of Comeback Graph.
It's such a backhanded compliment. It's like people who meet you and go, "You're actually a pretty good-looking person," or "You're actually a pretty nice guy!" I did definitely have to do a real and very serious comeback. I had to do a lot of work. It was really instructive. One of the best things that happened to me was to become really successful young and to feel all of a sudden a lot of people liked me and I was funny and cool and everybody laughed at even the not-great jokes, and to then become unpopular and uncool and not somebody who, if you had a relationship with that person, it was any good for your career. In fact, maybe even the opposite. And to see what happened to relationships that I really believed were real relationships and friendships as well as just the scale of who I'm talking to, who's calling you, who isn't, or just to see your world change in that way.

You mentioned directing being your path back, and at this point, I'm surprised when you act in other people's stuff. Like, if you direct, you can control every variable. Acting, not so much.
No, you're not in control as an actor. That's an important lesson.

This may have been a somewhat unique situation, but I was thinking about stories that you would tell about being on the *Justice League* set, in a hotel room in London, and you're by yourself, miserable, drinking –
Quite a bit.

←
jumper
Tom Ford
trousers
Cifonelli
shoes
Christian Louboutin

Exactly. And it would be understandable if you were like, yeah, "I'm never doing that again."
There are a number of reasons why that was a really excruciating experience. And they don't all have to do with the simple dynamic of, say, being in a superhero movie or whatever. I am not interested in going down that particular genre again, not because of that bad experience, but just: I've lost interest in what was of interest about it to me. But I certainly wouldn't want to replicate an experience like that. A lot of it was misalignment of agendas, understandings, expectations. And also by the way, I wasn't bringing anything particularly wonderful to that equation at the time, either. I had my own failings, significant failings, in that process and at that time.

Failings as an actor or a person?
I mean, my failings as an actor, you can watch the various movies and judge. But more of my failings of, in terms of why I had a bad experience, part of it is that what I was bringing to work every day was a lot of unhappiness. So I wasn't bringing a lot of positive energy to the equation. I didn't cause problems, but I came in and I did my job and I went home. But you've got to do a little bit better than that. Anyway, the point is, *this* work, *this* job is actually a way of trying to avoid that situation. I want to put together partnerships and filmmakers and cast and a studio apparatus that's aligned, where precisely that kind of misalignment doesn't happen and you have a much better work experience.

Do you have a coherent thought or postmortem on your time with the Batman character?
I had a really good time. I loved doing the Batman movie. I loved *Batman v Superman.* And I liked my brief stints on *The Flash* that I did and when I got to work with Viola Davis on *Suicide Squad* for a day or two. In terms of creatively, I really think that I like the idea and the ambition that I had for it, which was of the sort of older, broken, damaged Bruce Wayne. And it was something we really went for in the first movie.

But what happened was it started to skew too old for a big part of the audience. Like even my own son at the time was too scared to watch the movie. And so when I saw that I was like, "Oh shit, we have a problem." Then I think that's when you had a filmmaker that wanted to continue down that road and a studio that wanted to recapture all the younger audience at cross purposes. Then you have two entities, two people really wanting to do something different and that is a really bad recipe.

After that film, you did a few supporting parts, like in *The Tender Bar* and *The Last Duel,* but you've since drifted back toward the centre of movies again. Do you have a theory about why you are effective as a leading man?
I'm not self-aware enough really to know. But I have seen people write about or describe me, whether it's typically in reviews, which I mostly generally read, reviews certainly of the major critics that I know or I'm interested in. I was just reading something the other day, where what stands out is: "Affleck, of course, works successfully as," I think it was, *"a tarnished leading man."* Where I was like, "Oh, I see, this is my wheelhouse." Sort of the *Gone Girl* archetype, ranging from that to "Yes, he's our leading guy, he sort of seems that way, but we all know that underneath is a profoundly flawed person." And I am drawn to that – everybody is a flawed person and that's what makes them interesting. So maybe I play into that.

I think also part of that has got to be, it's been, I don't know, almost 30 years that I've been doing this in the sort of public or semi-public life. Imagine just the volume of stuff that – and particularly certain years where it was just relentlessly negative and exaggerated, but nonetheless – the impression of a "tarnished leading man" sort of makes sense to me. Because I know, for example, people will see Matt Damon one way and me another way. Just the classic comparison.

I still meet people, and I'm sure you do too, who still really think you and Matt are your respective characters from *Good Will Hunting.*

Oh, dude, what I didn't realise when we made that movie was that everybody who saw that movie would more or less assume that we were those characters. I really thought, Oh, I'll turn in a performance as this guy, and the more convincing it is, the better it will be for me, because the whole goal of that movie, really for Matt and I in terms of why we started, was to get work as actors. It was very easy to convince people since it was the first time they saw me that that was exactly who I was.

→
dressing gown
Anderson & Sheppard
scarf
Tom Ford
sunglasses
Maison Bonnet

The thing about that is, I've read some interviews of mine from back then, and I kind of think, This is a person who's trying to use the longest words that they know. I felt a little bit like my grandfather. I was trying to be like, "Look, I'm not stupid. Look, I'm smart." Which is unfortunate because that energy of, "Look at me, look, I'm this, look I'm that," always has the opposite effect. It's like, why is this guy selling me this car so hard?

I have wondered about this – after *Good Will Hunting,* when you suddenly get opportunities to do big films, and not all of those big films are fully coherent from a script or conceptual perspective, did you ever feel trapped? I'm thinking of something like your now famous *Armageddon* DVD commentary track, where you basically say, "This movie makes no sense."

That is one of the achievements of my career for which I'm willing to pat myself on the back. I believe that may be *at least* in the top five all-time DVD commentaries. By the way, nobody said anything to me. I don't think any of the other people listened to it or gave a fuck until years later when it was played. And I was kind of shocked and appalled that I went on there and started being like… I mean, that's all true. Everything I said was a hundred per cent true, but that's the point. You're not supposed to go on there and tell *all* of the truth.

I never expected, "Oh, this is going to be genius." I thought, I'm going to go do a big Hollywood action movie and I love it. And yes, during the movie, I was kind of surprised to find that sometimes they weren't all that interested in making sense. I remember Billy Bob [Thornton] was having a long conversation about a scene in the space mission control or whatever it was, and he was like, "No, that's OK, man. I can stop talking about it. I just kind of like to be in the kind of movies that make sense, you know what I mean? But fuck it, we don't have to do that. We're not doing that on this one. Fuck it." And I was the only person who was kind of like, "OK, I guess we don't operate by those other rules here." But there's a sense of being small and of this thing being big. And so I felt like a little ant on the elephant when I would shoot my mouth off about the conversation I had with Michael [Bay, the director of *Armageddon*] about why is it easier to train oil drillers to be astronauts than to train astronauts to drill a hole in the ground?

How long in Hollywood did you feel like the equivalent of that ant?

Good Will Hunting came out – we were coming out the same month as another film, which I was told was a disaster and was going to be a terrible bomb, which was *Titanic.* Not a bomb! But actually it was such a phenomenal success that I think it really helped our movie because I think people would go to see *Titanic* and it would be sold out and they'd be like, "Fuck, what else is here? I guess we'll see the Boston kids in that movie with Robin Williams." So I didn't quite have a sense of being famous in any way. But then, if there's a kind of overnight experience, I had it, because the Oscars that year happened to be the highest rated in the last 30 years or whatever because *Titanic,* this massively popular movie, was nominated. The vast majority of people that watched the Oscars that night, it was tens of millions, certainly hadn't seen the movie, but our little kind of fairy-tale story was very appealing. And so I was shooting *Dogma* and we had flown back to LA to do the Oscars and flew back to Pittsburgh. And when I got back there, I remember there was a huge crowd outside our little crummy trailers, and I took pictures. Because I was like, *This is amazing. I'm going to remember this.* I thought, Oh, this is a fleeting thing. I was 25, and I thought, This is insane. And it always felt to me like one of those movies where one character goes in another character's body. Like, oh, this is where you're going to get to be in the body of Ringo Starr or something.

Somebody else's life.

It was somebody else's life. And it took me a long time actually to be able to harmonise that sense. So I do remember that shift, to answer your question. I remember feeling very small. And then I didn't feel big, but I felt thrust out in front. And I remember feeling not sure. Like: how does a person behave? What does a person do? How does a person handle this? And sometimes I did stupid things and feel embarrassed of ridiculous, goofy things I said, because I really didn't know, like, am I here doing *Jackass* or something? Am I just running through the background streaking across the Oscars naked and that's my character? You can feel uninvited or, it's going to go away soon. And so, "Oh, you might as well turn around and mug at the camera because clearly they're going to usher you off." And it took a long time. There's no playbook.

When we were talking about Matt the other day, you made, I think it was mostly a joke in passing, but you were like, "If Scorsese or Spielberg had called, I would've taken those calls."

I would've taken *Saving Private Ryan.* If Martin Scorsese called me and told me to play a waiter, I would take it. Steven Spielberg is one of the great filmmaking architects to ever live. I feel that way about Chris Nolan. I may go visit Matt on the set just to watch Nolan direct. I'm not even kidding at all.

Do you feel overlooked in some way by the great directors of your generation?

No. There are a couple different approaches to acting that I've noticed other actors have. Some look at it as a zero-sum game. Like if this person's in that part, they're in my way. And if they were lopped off at the knees, then I could either move up one spot in the long line or I might actually have that part. I feel like you kind of make your own work. And I don't sit around being like, "Why is Marty hiring Leo? Should be me." I really don't… If I was going to obsess over something, it would be more about how I really see myself as a director. I think that's what, if you asked me, is there something that you would like to be recognised for? If you pick one thing, I would say it was that. But I also don't feel that I've been denied or thwarted. I feel really lucky.

This gets back to something I asked you before, which is, given that, why don't you just direct?

Because it's so consuming. The one regret I have about all the movies that I've directed is the amount of time it's taken me away from my kids. I love making art. I loved making *The Town.* But I was away from my kids for long periods of time. There's little chunks that I missed, and that doesn't feel good. And I think part of what's great about this Artists Equity job, part of why I love it, is because I'm in LA. When we're done at 2.30, I'm going to go, and I'll be home at 3.45 when my kids get off the bus. And I'm able to construct a life that does that. And that means more to me than any of it. That makes me happier.

ZACH BARON *is* US GQ*'s senior special projects editor.*

The sex, checks and eccentricities of Daniel Lee's Burberry

BY
Murray Clark

PORTRAIT BY
Brianna Capozzi

THE NATION IS NERVOUS. THE OUTLOOK IS GLOOMY. AND AT BURBERRY, ONE OF THE LAST GLOBAL BASTIONS OF BRITISH LUXURY, CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER DANIEL LEE IS SEEKING TO INJECT A SENSUAL OPTIMISM INTO OUR DEEPLY ANXIOUS TIMES.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
Francesc Planes

LONDON ISN'T EASILY SHOCKED. SOMETHING EARTH-SHATTERING – SAY, A PANDEMIC – MIGHT SEND THE WORLD REELING, AND YET SOHO WILL STILL FILL UP AT THE FIRST SNIFF OF ON-STREET PINTS. THE MORE NOSTALGIC AMONG US MIGHT CALL IT BLITZ MENTALITY; THE MORE REASONABLE WOULD CALL IT GENERAL METROPOLITAN DETACHMENT. BUT ON THIS PARTICULAR CRISP, SUB-ZERO MORNING, A CROWD IS GATHERING AT ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL. PEOPLE HOLD IPHONES ALOFT TO CAPTURE A MOMENT. GRANTED, THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THIS MOMENT; THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S FOR, OR WHY IT'S PLAYING OUT HERE. BUT IT *FEELS* LIKE A MOMENT – ONE THAT'S TAKEN LONDON BY SURPRISE. AFTER ALL, THIS IS WHERE CHARLES AND DIANA MADE THEIR ILL-FATED NUPTIALS. ITS PLACE IN THE BRITISH PSYCHE IS SACRED.

BEYOND A CORDON of hi-vis heavies, a Hollywood-level film production is unfolding. Cherry pickers invade the hallowed space of the 317-year-old dome. Around a fleet of parked up Winnebagos, pop-up kitchens dish out coffee and pastries to runners. And all eyes, on-set and off it, are focused on David Gandy, still Britain's most handsome man, clutching a spray of wilted roses as he's battered by rain that'd be considered biblical if it wasn't coming from a hose that looks a bit like the Loch Ness monster. His heavy brow admits defeat, but his coat – a boxy half-zip Burberry jacket in the house check – does not. The beige silk blend almost shines. "It's silly," says a gleeful aide with a clipboard. Someone calls cut. Gandy is handed a towel and smirks. The entire crew cracks up. "Silly's good," says a light West Yorkshire accent from behind the camera. It belongs to Daniel Lee, Burberry's chief creative officer, and the architect of this sprawling production. "Silly is good."

Silly isn't a word you'd immediately assign to someone in Lee's position. He is widely credited as the great energiser of Bottega Veneta, a very serious (and very sexy) Italian brand that went from old-rich-lady bags in 2018 to become A$AP Rocky's go-to for louche, hyped-up elegance. He studied under the tutelage of very serious designers, like Phoebe Philo (the godmother of austere minimalism), and Nicolas Ghesquière (a grandmaster of Elizabethan-coded luxury). So it's a surprise to have Lee pilot a campaign that feels like a series of Richard Curtis shorts, just with more supermodels. Sadly, there's no sign of Hugh Grant. Plenty of other national treasures check-in, though: Kate Winslet, Micheal Ward, Nicholas Hoult, and Richard E Grant. Naomi Campbell even rides in a black cab with a fully-suited knight – a nod to the equestrian knight insignia Lee resurrected from the Burberry archives.

The creative director appears to have sign-off on every last detail. A bouquet for Chen Kun, the Chinese multi-hyphenate, is shown to Lee for a spotcheck before it moves on camera. "I think it looks nice," he says, tilting his head in thought like someone sitting front row at a particularly dense off-Broadway play. "The stems should maybe be a little bit shorter."

The cameras roll once more. Gandy gets stood up for a date. It's funny, in a bumbling, absurdist, slightly self-deprecating way; a jolly nihilism that's as unique to the British Isles as a village fête or 14 pints on a bank holiday. Silly is good for Daniel Lee's Burberry, because as one of the most British labels of all, it works to set the brand apart.

"I guess that's the difference between us and French and Italian luxury," Lee says. "It's the sense of humour. Everyone wants to be part of it." Think of the continental greats, and the fashion is exclusive; ring-fenced, po-faced, really only for people with elite access. Burberry is a designer brand, too, but it feels more universal, and as one of the few bastions of global British fashion, has a nationwide identity that means something to everybody. Grandparents in Nottinghamshire will have a tale to tell about one of the many iterations of Burberry; could senior citizens in Normandy do the same with Hubert de Givenchy?

Lee and I chit-chat as another scene wraps. He clocks my accent and immediately asks "Where are you from?" with that signature mix of intrigue and caution that comes from a Yorkshire-to-Yorkshire intro. Upon hearing my hometown, a smile breaks through: "Oh, I know there." The air grows a little warmer. We talk about Christmas plans back in the provinces, and walking home from school in horizontal rain, and the dangers of jumbo-sized portions of food that are standard procedure for a Sunday family dinner in Bradford, or Hull, or Leeds. I talk about going home for two weeks, and his eyes widen. "No, just a few days is enough for me." It's a happy scene. The Burberry crew seem content, hopeful even.

The mood takes a dent. We're told by a very sombre cameraman that the light is dropping – a dangerous thing if you're in the business of films. As the security guard lets me out, I serpentine through the crowd. Despite the visible clouds of breath and the chattering teeth, it has grown in number. Some onlookers frown with puzzlement. Others crane their necks, still filming videos that will be forgotten in the camera roll. I hear a few people exchange theories: maybe it's a Marvel film, one whispers. Nah, it's a K-pop video. And still they stand, all of them cold, confused, and trying to work out what the fuck is going on with the beautiful people in the gleaming Burberry coats.

TWO MONTHS LATER, Lee is sitting in his office inside Burberry's Horseferry House HQ, a quietly imposing art deco building just a stone's throw from the stressed staffers and protesters that mill outside the Houses of Parliament. Like Burberry at large, the office has recently undergone a full-scale renovation; inside the vast, sandstone atrium, I perch on a streamlined marshmallowy sofa upholstered in the electric 'Burberry blue' check. A candlelight acoustic cover of Taylor Swift's "Look What You Made Me Do" ambles from the speakers.

Lee has a cold. "Ugh sorry, I'm not very well," he says, greeting me from behind a huge desk. His office, which feels more like a sanctum, is dimly lit and full of clean lines, a few choice bookshelves and little else. It smells expensive. Lee reclines in a petrol-coloured Cole Buxton hoodie, and a tan bomber draped over his shoulders in a way that feels like both a cocoon and a straight-up flex. Lee's hair is still just-ruffled-enough, his

BURBERRY
I ❤ London
FOSTERS
London

Clockwise from top: Ian Wright; Orlando Bloom; London postcards; a guest at the AW25 show; a suit of armour accessorised with a scarf.

chevron jaw accented by the room's many shadows (the creative director famously takes a good photo, the most viral being a shirtless, tranquil 2020 cover of *Cultured* magazine).

Despite the blocked sinuses, Lee is on his feet within moments, pulling open a sliding door that joins his office to a studio that is bigger, and full of bright overhead lights. "We were in Soho, and it's obviously a lot cooler, but everyone was split across different floors and the lift was always bust," he says. Lee seems proud of this new space, the design of which he had a direct hand in. "There's about a hundred-ish of us here now [in the design team]. When I first started I was like 'What the hell?' Because in my previous job I had a decent-sized team, but not like this big."

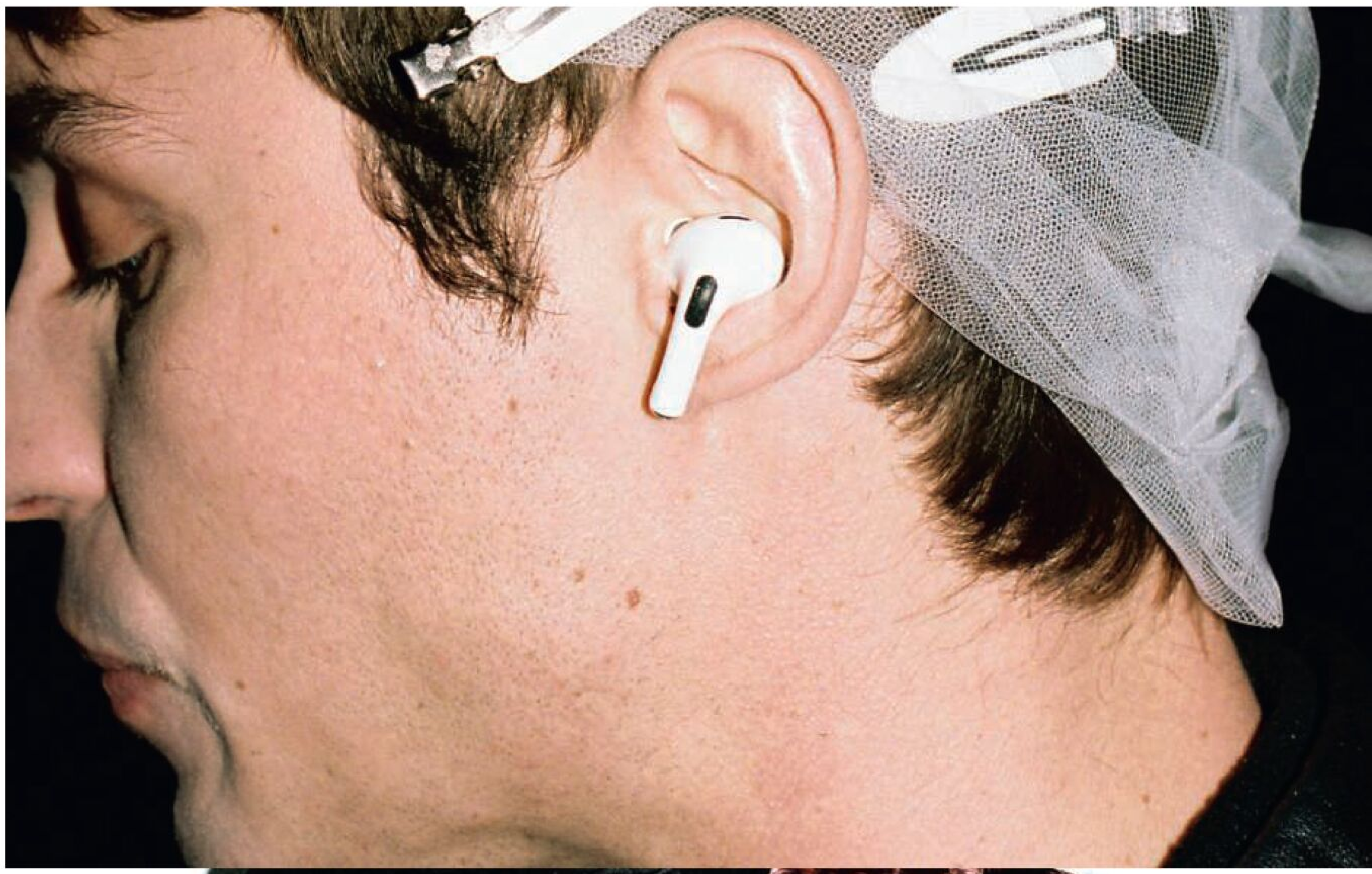
Burberry is a giant of British fashion. It employs around 9,000 people worldwide, and crosses multiple categories. That requires a mountain of work. "Normally, brands are accessory-focused, and accessories, frankly, are less work," says Lee. "It's a bigger business here. There's one team that does the main collection, then there's a team that does the shows. And then there's also accessories. There's kids, homeware, soft accessories..."

Thomas Burberry, the brand's founder, is credited as being the inventor of gabardine, a tough but smooth fabric that was a technical breakthrough at the time, and helped it become the go-to for men who did insane things like trek to the South Pole. It wasn't until the '90s that Burberry became a luxury fashion brand proper, under the steer of Rose Marie Bravo, the brand's former CEO. From 2001 onwards, Burberry enjoyed its boomtimes under the creative direction of Christopher Bailey, a man who managed to meld the aspirational and the attainable with his trademark shine (literally and figuratively: his grail product was arguably the rainbow metallic Burberry trenches that came in 2012). They were happy days for the brand, and for Britain. In the early noughties, the economy was growing steadily. Wages were high. People looked to London to lead, and with it, Burberry. But after 17 years at the brand, Bailey stepped down in 2018 as Britain bruised under the pro-austerity Tory regime. Salaries stagnated, while living standards and even life expectancy were on the way down. The mood felt dour, the country poorer and pricklier.

At the time, Lee was being plucked from relative obscurity to lead Bottega Veneta. He was just 32. The following year, in 2019, he swept the board at the Fashion Awards with a record-breaking four wins including the blue ribbon: Designer of the Year. Following a period of mass reinvention and flying sales, he quietly and quickly exited Bottega Veneta in 2021. (The surprise departure was described as a "joint decision" in an official press release.) The following year, he was appointed to steer Burberry, then a ship on an unsure course after half a decade under former Givenchy maestro Riccardo Tisci.

Though he created a Burberry that was both future-gothic and glitzy, Tisci's vision felt out of sync with a post-Brexit Britain that was obsessing over its supposed glory days of the past. The Burberry heritage seemed to disappear. Even the logo, once an elegant copperplate type, had been changed to a soulless sans serif in the style of almost every other luxury European brand.

Lee's intent is to manoeuvre Burberry back to its heritage, and back to the classics – albeit in a very Daniel Lee way. International press and buyers flew into London en masse to see his Burberry debut during the AW23 season, and the expectations were heavy. Lee held the show in Kennington Park – the first of three set in a green corner of the capital. That, in itself, was unexpected. As a quiet but central space just south of Westminster, Kennington is home to a strange coalition of unassuming wealthy old people, MPs, civil servants and incredibly jacked gay men. I remember editors complaining about "ugh, how far" it was from central London. (For reference, Kennington is on the edge of zone one.)



Inside a smoky tent filled with bracken and hot water bottle sleeves, guests were introduced to a Burberry that felt purpose-built for a mad one on a country estate. The house check was poured into Wimbledon purples, blood reds and acid yellows. Trapper hats were comically oversized. There was a cute and slightly silly (that word again) duck print. Over the space of around 15 minutes, Burberry felt inherently British again. But where it'd been a high-society, stiff-upper-lipped sort of British in the past, it was now chaotic, wilder, on the *Saltburn* end of old money. Lee has dropped seven more collections since then, each riffing on a mix of youthwear and straight-up sex. A turtleneck knit in a shock yellow version of the house check is pulled taut over pecs. Leather is plentiful. Ascendant model Kit Butler closed Lee's second show in nothing but low-slung hipster slacks. "I like sensuality. Think back to the brand, and what I always remember at Burberry are those great Kate Moss and Liberty Ross pictures in bikinis. For me that was very sexy," says Lee. "So you'd have this counter of this trench coat in bad weather, protected, wrapped up, versus this kind of hot girl in a bikini."

Sexiness is something that Lee thinks Britons have within them, despite the hangover of Victorian repression and the accusations of bad weather and bad teeth. "Like, Milan is probably sexiest. But I think it's there [in the UK]. And I think everybody can express that in a different way. I'd say it's more personal here, and a little bit more hidden," says Lee.

That eternal clutch for the steamy has resulted in a stirring swimwear line (super-tight trunks in the house check were especially popular). It's also perhaps why extraordinarily beautiful people like Rosie Huntington-Whiteley are often dressed by Burberry, and why men like Gandy star in brand campaigns. Plus, London's acting elite seem to genuinely want in on Lee's era. "I love Burberry and everything that they're doing in today's culture. When I think about a luxury British brand, Burberry comes straight to mind," says *Top Boy*'s Micheal Ward. "Being from the UK and aspiring to be great, I want to collaborate with great brands and talented people like Daniel." Richard E Grant was just as glowing of the current administration: "Daniel Lee has reinterpreted the Burberry brand, honouring its heritage while keeping it current and contemporary."

For all the change, though, some things remain the same – chief among them the trench coat, the majestic treasure of Burberry, and something Lee describes as "sacrosanct". "You play with proportion, you play with detail, but ultimately you want it to feel serious," he says. "Because it is the hero of the brand, and it should be held on a pedestal." He refers to Burberry's heritage constantly, all too aware that the British public has a vested interest in the label. People feel part of it.

"There's certain brands where being visible is more important – I think [Burberry] is one of them," he says. "Bottega wasn't necessarily as public, neither was Celine. But here, because again you are the big British brand, you're an example to all the students in the schools here in a way. This organisation expects more presence too."

A DAY BEFORE we speak, Gucci announced the swift departure of its creative director, Sabato De Sarno (his replacement was later confirmed to be Demna, the disruptive designer at Balenciaga). I wonder how much existential dread this must conjure in the designer at the wheel of a massive label. "What's different is that once the creative director changes, that's only the beginning, y'know? That's obviously the news cycle and it's what everybody knows. But after that point, the amount of change that then triggers in an organisation," says Lee. His words start to arrive a little faster. "I think we're in a particular moment where the entire industry feels like it's trembling, because there is so much change. And yes, people are reporting about creative directors and CEOs moving position, but everybody on every level in every department is kind of going through the same thing."

The whole "one bad review can make or break you" cliché is standard fashion industry melodrama, but it still often does impact a designer's standing. Despite thunderous applause for his work at Bottega, the feedback to Lee's Burberry era has been more mixed. Of the first collection, Cathy Horyn, *The Cut*'s fashion critic-at-large, said there was "too much stuff, too much merchandising and product development – and not enough of pure design." More recently, menswear podcast *Throwing Fits* was even harsher (F-bomb laden hardlines tend to be its MO, though).

Lee still gets nervous. "Always. Terrified," he says, slowly shaking his head. "Especially now, fashion is very in the public forum. I think with social media, everyone has a comment. Everyone has things to say. Putting work out is always nerve-wracking. Creative directors I know that are much more experienced than me and doing it for much longer, they still have the same feeling. If it does go away, then you don't care any more. I don't know."

But Lee has seemed to relax into his stride. The brand's SS25 collection was polished, tailored and wearable, which is a very important quality when you're a brand as universal and commercial as Burberry. Plus, it added some much-needed refinement to the great indie sleaze revival (the military jackets, the parkas, the deep-end utilitarianism). It wasn't a straight-up cynical TikTok play, nor did it riff on the ugly irony of so-bad-it's-good-ness that ultra-viral brands have plugged into. "You can never please everyone, and you actually should never aim to," says Lee. "Because if you try and please everyone, you please no one."

In this ever-accelerating world of designer churn at luxury fashion houses, it's hard not to think about the future. Professionally, Lee has lived a life. "I know, because I'm approaching 40, I'm like 'Shit,'" he laughs. "How has it all happened, you know? How did I come to this point?" More recently, the press had been rife with speculation about Lee's future, in particular linking him with the top job at Jil Sander. The brand, formerly led by husband-and-wife design duo Luke and

"WHAT I REMEMBER AT BURBERRY ARE THOSE GREAT KATE MOSS AND LIBERTY ROSS PICTURES IN BIKINIS. THAT WAS VERY SEXY. YOU'D HAVE THIS TRENCH COAT, PROTECTED, WRAPPED UP, VERSUS THIS HOT GIRL IN A BIKINI."

> **“EVERY TIME I SEE A LONDON DESIGNER, WE SAY HI. IT’S NICE WHEN YOU SEE PEOPLE AROUND. IN PARIS AND MILAN, IT’S A LITTLE BIT MORE COMPETITIVE, A BIT MORE COLD.”**

Lucie Meier, announced that its autumn/winter 2025 collection at Milan Fashion Week would be their last.

Often, Lee trails off when talking, and lets a moment’s pause fill the room. He does this several times throughout the evening, and it speaks to the mythology that’s slowly fogged up around the designer. One minute, he’s chatty, kind of innocent, meandering quickly through sentences like a new friend you’ve made in the smoking area; the next, he’s mysterious, private, comfortable with the silence and, maybe, a little bit media trained. I ask him about these two sides – especially at a time when creative directors are more in the public eye than ever. “People do it for different reasons, right? I mean, I do it because I really like the creative work. That’s what drives me to doing it. It’s not to be a public face, or be about my profile,” he says.

It’s beginning to get late. Street lights outside Lee’s cavernous office flicker into life; a lot of Burberry staffers have already started their commute home.

“It’s a hard time for the country. And I do think the brand did well when people were really excited to look at the UK. “The UK really felt like the centre of culture,” says Lee. “I don’t think it necessarily does any more. I guess because of the internet, because of social media, everything feels a lot more global.”

Still, there’s hope for Burberry. After stuttering out of the FTSE 100 last September, there’s market optimism that it’ll bounce straight back. After new boss Joshua Schulman announced a renewed push for outerwear and heritage designs, Burberry’s share price surged. Sales beat forecasts. This sort of confidence doesn’t come naturally to the UK.

And for Lee, there is still so much to be pleased about on this strange island. “We try to celebrate the best parts of the country. So for me, that really is the creativity, the music, the theatre, the film that still comes out of here,” he says. “There’s an amazing crop of young British actors that are all having great global careers right now. There continues to be great sportspeople. There continues to be greatness from the UK. We just want to be seen as part of that.”

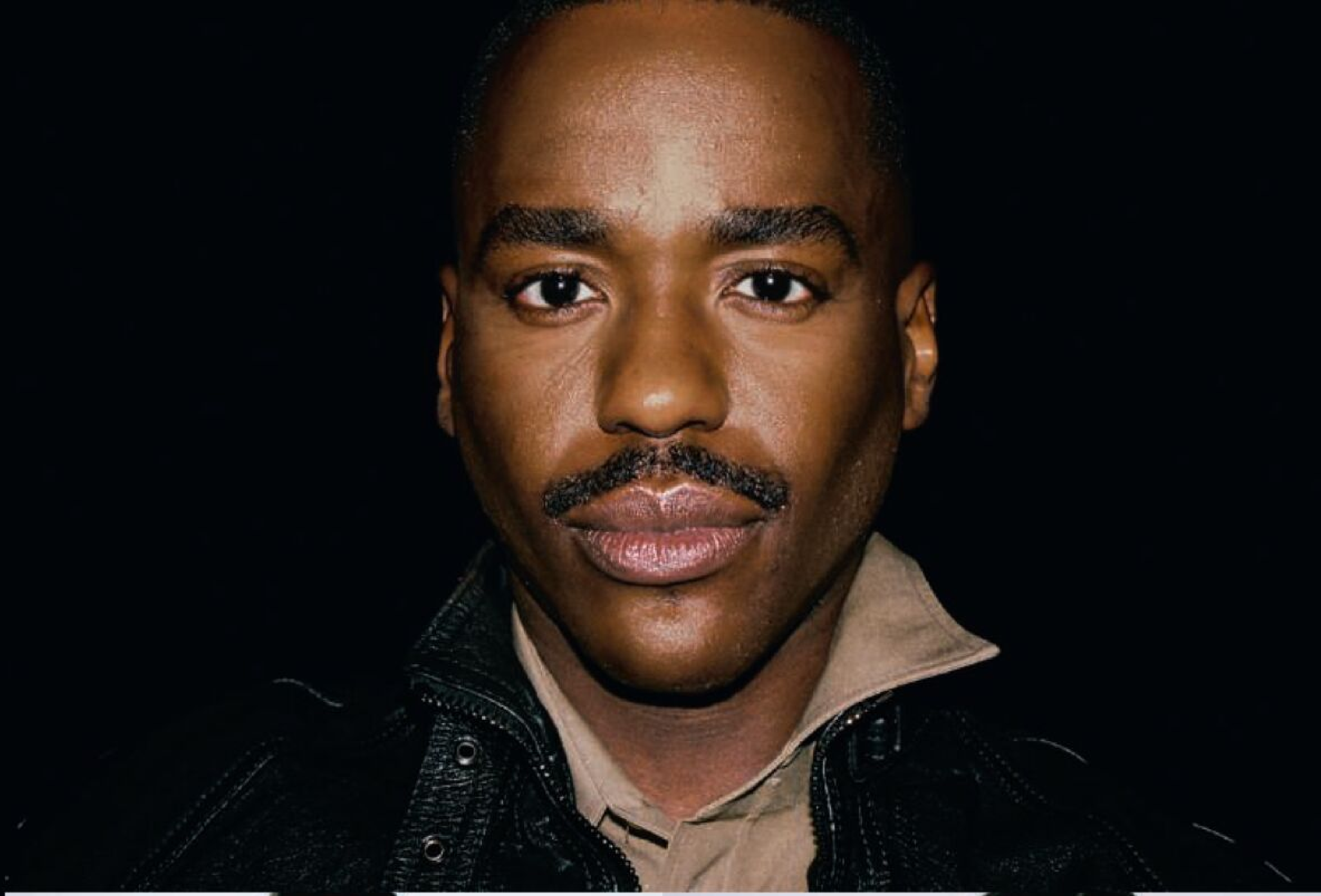
There’s a camaraderie in British fashion that Lee didn’t necessarily experience on the continent either. “I’ve been to plenty of Martine Rose shows, she’s been to mine. Every time I see a London designer, we say hi. I see [McQueen’s] Seán [McGirr] around, I see Maximilian [Davis, of Ferragamo] around. And it’s nice when you see them!” he says, and begins to laugh a little. “In Paris and Milan, it’s a little bit more, uh, competitive. It’s a bit more cold.”

The community here has rallied around Lee, and Burberry. In an industry that gets high on schadenfreude, there’s a collective wish for this brand to just do well – a goodwill that unites underground artists like Shygirl to national treasures such as Joanna Lumley. “Everyone wants it to be so good,” a journalist stressed to me over a mid-schedule fashion week pint last season. “Like, it’s so good for all of us if it is good.”

In late February, Burberry’s autumn/winter show – the de facto closing ceremony of London Fashion Week – arrives. At once, things look bigger. Crowds swell around a neoclassical monument in Tate Britain. Drapes depicting a faded pastoral scene pool onto a blue (Burberry blue!) runway. A flurry of iPhones are held aloft as the Burberry cavalier – the same one that chilled in a cab with Campbell – pads around, jerking intermittently like an Arthurian Basil Fawlty in a Burberry scarf. “What in *The Masked Singer* is going on lmao” storied one journalist on Instagram. Others captured Anna Wintour next to the knight as he took a selfie. In the blitz of a thousand camera flashes, she was laughing.

The clothes belonged reassuringly to the national idea of Burberry. Corduroys, suits and coats – serious coats; what the British do so well. But the best medicine for Burberry is, perhaps, something universally prescribed, and what Lee wanted all along: silliness to sweeten this island’s chronic solemnity. Grant formed part of the model line-up. Steve Coogan, the holy father of Alan Partridge, was doing Michael Caine impressions as guests took their seats. The onlookers swelled with a strange, warm energy that felt alien to the British condition. The mood was up. Could this be… optimism? The knight took his seat between Jodie Turner-Smith and Nicholas Hoult. The collection was blessed with good headlines – and the brand was buoyed by yet more good news. The rumoured Jil Sander move didn’t happen; it was announced that Simone Bellotti of Swiss brand Bally was to take up the top job. For now, Lee remains in Britain. “It’s really an honour to work for Burberry,” he warmly said to the fashion press corps following the show. “I think we are in a really positive place.”

MURRAY CLARK *is* BRITISH GQ*’s senior style editor.*



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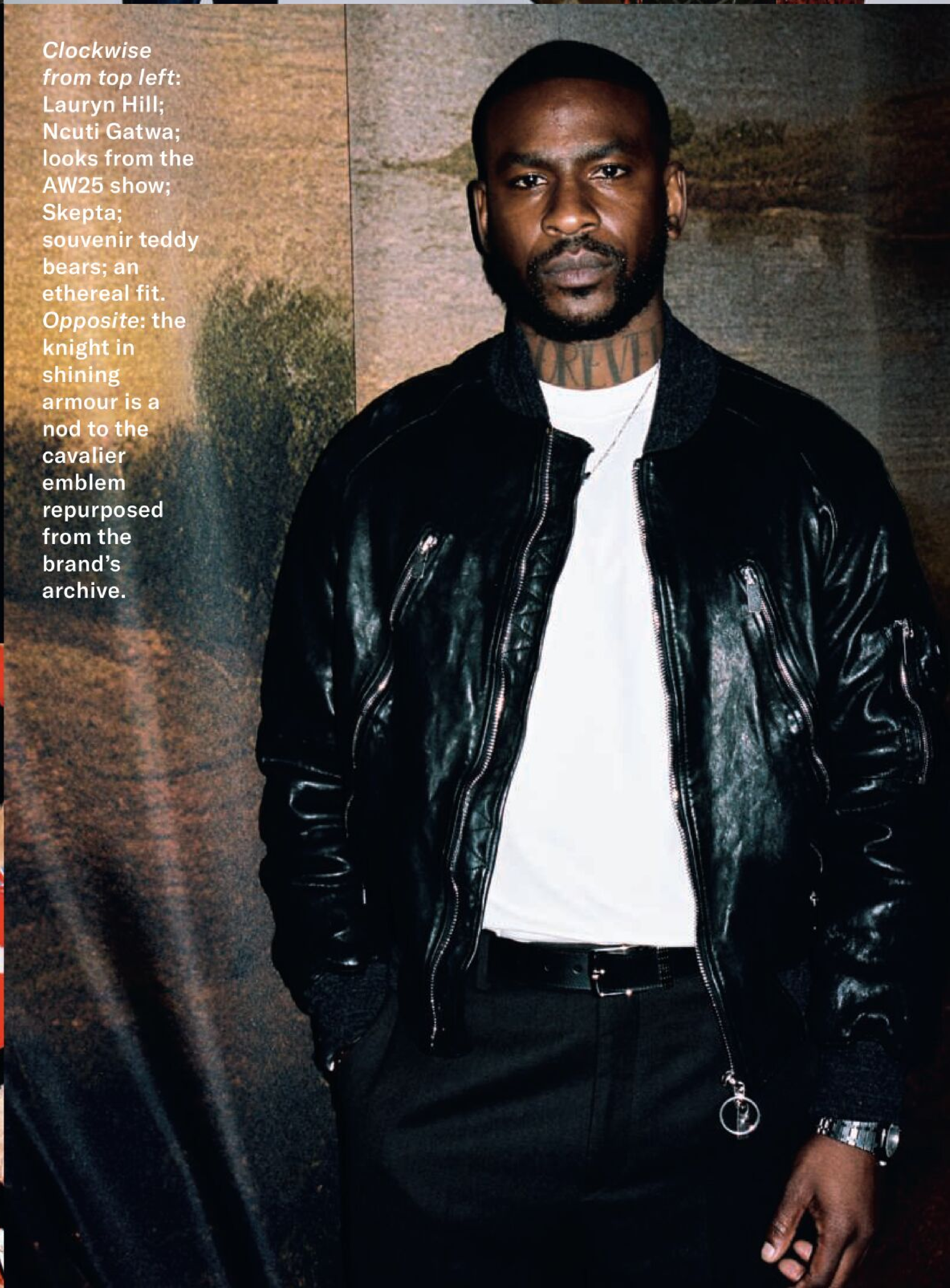

Clockwise from top left: Lauryn Hill; Ncuti Gatwa; looks from the AW25 show; Skepta; souvenir teddy bears; an ethereal fit. *Opposite*: the knight in shining armour is a nod to the cavalier emblem repurposed from the brand's archive.

Private
Powder

The next frontier of exclusive, members-club culture? Mountains. We went to Netflix founder Reed Hastings' new Powder Mountain to see how private ski resorts are taking over – and changing – the American landscape.

BY GRAYSON SCHAFFER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL FRIBERG

Skiing is supposed to be freedom: the cold air, sparkling mountains, and skis cutting smooth, fast arcs across freshly fallen snow. And yet if you've done it recently, you know that few places have the capacity to produce misery and rage like a crowded resort. The traffic! The parking! The queues for the lifts! By the time you even make it to the summit, the trails are skied off and crowded, increasing the likelihood of an accident like Gwyneth Paltrow's 2016 collision with a retired optometrist on a beginner's run in Deer Valley, Utah. Now add a litter of querulous children who "hate skiing," can't carry their own gear, let alone put it on, and won't be pacified by syrupy, machine-dispensed hot chocolate, and it's a recipe for emotional collapse that's as expensive as it is self-inflicted.

The great luxury of skiing wasn't always quite so masochistic. But interest in the sport reached new heights after the pandemic, as remote workers became less anchored to city cubicles. In America, two private equity-backed firms, Vail Resorts and Alterra Mountain Company, have in recent years acquired 52 of the country's best ski resorts. In Utah, Vail grabbed Park City and neighbouring Canyons, and Alterra took Deer Valley. In Vermont, Vail has Mount Snow, and Alterra has Sugarbush. Both companies put their collection of ski hills on multi-mountain season passes, which cost about $1,000 for the year. At the same time, they increased the price of day passes to, in some cases, more than $300. Now, anyone who wants to ski more than a handful of times per year (and can do maths) is a holder of Vail's Epic pass or Alterra's Ikon pass.

$100M
The cost of taking over Powder Mountain.

This is what the management consultants call differential pricing, and skiers complain it has enabled America's record numbers of skiers to act as a powder-crazed swarm that descends across the mountains every time school is out or there's a promising weather forecast. The pass era offers cost-efficient flexibility, but when the conditions are right, anyone who already bought a pass might want to get their money's worth. Has this been a net good or bad for skiing? There is plenty of time to debate it in the queues for the lifts.

Some extremely fit and self-reliant skiers are escaping the crowds by strapping on touring skis and trekking into the backcountry, with its attendant avalanche risks. But another subset of truly blessed souls have simply vanished from the queue entirely as though divinely raptured by the invisible hand of snowboarder Adam Smith himself. Where have they gone, exactly? Heaven?

Close. They have gone to private ski clubs. Much like how private aviation captured ultra-high-net-worth fliers and left the merely prosperous to grovel for frequent-flier status, these clubs are enabling the richest sliver of society to opt out of traditional resorts and preserve not only their sanity but their anonymity. Ski hills have traditionally been a place where the powerful were forced to share space with the rest of us, as when vice-president JD Vance, fresh out of a heated Oval Office meeting with Volodymyr Zelenskyy in early March, tried to take a holiday at Sugarbush. Vance was met by protesters and hecklers, and he and his family decided to change their plans. He didn't have to subject himself to a mob. In 2025, there are more than a half-dozen private clubs across the country. At these mountains, there are rarely queues, and fresh powder may last for a week. Or so I learned when I skied Powder Haven, the residential side of Utah's Powder Mountain, which was recently acquired by Netflix founder Reed Hastings. Since last year, half of the chairlifts and lodges are open only to club members. The other half are open to everyone, and are in the process of being enhanced by works from artists like James Turrell.

In between runs at Powder Haven, I cruised up to the Skylodge, a set of cosy interlocking yurts straddling the summit. There was no security or formal check-in, and yet the staff of polite and cheerful 20-somethings somehow knew my name. Somebody offered to make me an espresso. I filled a plate with perfectly moist scrambled eggs and thick bacon from the breakfast buffet and sat down in a fuzzy sofa pit. It felt more like the living room of a very generous new friend than what it actually is: a temporary home base for one of America's emerging class of superexclusive ski clubs.

Each of these magical winter refuges has its own particular flavour. The shy celebs go for the fortresslike log homes of Montana's Yellowstone Club, which is in the midst of a major expansion. Others point their top-of-the-range Mercedes-Benz Sprinter vans and SUVs towards the Hermitage Club of Vermont, which was taken private by the mountain's homeowners during the pandemic. And the LA and San Francisco tech crowd can have one of Powder Haven's courtesy cars meet them at the private airport.

To join these clubs often costs millions of dollars in property, plus initiation fees, plus tens of thousands in annual fees – not to mention, sometimes, multigenerational personality vetting. In this way, skiing in America is becoming more like elite golf and racquet clubs, as well as the private social clubs proliferating across New York, and less like skiing in Europe, where chairlift fares at public mountains remain so reasonable that they're drawing cost-conscious American skiers.

While eating breakfast at Powder Haven, I took in a vaguely ski-themed John Baldessari on the wall. It paled next to the 300-degree views of the Great Salt Lake peeking through the Wasatch Front and the Bannock Range of Idaho spilling into the northern horizon. Invisibly tucked into the mountains about 20 miles to our south was, I had heard, the next big thing in private skiing, Wasatch Peaks Ranch. Many of my most successful friends are now talking about the new club, where, according to someone close to the project, reclusive venture capitalists and hedge-fund patriarchs are putting down seven-figure deposits on bare lots that start at about $10 million.

Before I started reporting on this story, I thought I was clued into the world of private leisure. Some of my earliest memories are of jumping golf carts off the paths at the Congressional Country Club outside Washington DC, and trying to explain to my dad how I'd managed to eat 14 Nutty Buddys in a single billing cycle. When I was nine, we moved out west to a farm outside of Sandpoint, Idaho, to ski and be among nature. I went to a fancy East Coast boarding school. In short, I had in my mind a picture of the landscape of wealth and privilege in America.

But private ski resorts are a peephole into another strata entirely – one that's not only flush but teeming. There are enough ultra-high-net-worth people in America to fill Aspen, Telluride, Deer Valley, and Jackson Hole, among a dozen tiny mountain towns. Baby boomers are holding between $84 trillion and $146 trillion in assets, much of which will be inherited by millennials in what economists refer to as the Great Wealth Transfer. Add to that the spoils of the tech boom, American energy independence, the AI trade, crypto, and a fire hose of pandemic-era government spending, and you can start to see how millions of Americans may soon need a fancier place to ski.

At its best, skiing on an untracked run hits like the feeling of flight, with the added thrill of conquest. "Have you any idea what the street value of this mountain is?" Curtis Armstrong presciently asks, snorting pure snow through a straw in the 1985 John Cusack ski classic *Better Off Dead*. But unlike drugs or even diamonds, untracked powder can't be manufactured,

$30,000–$100,000

Membership fees at Powder Haven.

RESIDENTIAL LIFTS
HOMEOWNER ACCESS ONLY

$2M

Average cost of a plot on Powder Haven.

$1,499

Season ticket to public parts of Powder.

though Lord knows engineers from China to Saudi Arabia have tried. For now, it can literally only fall like manna from heaven. And with winters getting more capricious each year, the new land rush for higher, colder acres is on. If I could buy a mountain and solve all my problems, would I? You bet.

ON MY SECOND morning at Powder, I geared up in the Skylodge with eight or so of the club's 170 members – neighbours, as they're known – for some cat skiing. The club had recently purchased a few thousand acres of additional advanced terrain and will begin construction of a high-speed quad lift there this summer. When it's complete, Powder Mountain will have 5,000 acres of slopes whose lifts are open only to neighbours and their guests, and another 5,200 open to everyone, making it the biggest assemblage of skiable acreage in the country. The terrain is respectable too. One especially exposed pitch called Neck Beard would make even the best skiers pucker.

The Haven clientele is low-key. No fur. No hubcap-size watches. Nothing that would hint that you are milling around in a yurtful of centimillionaires. On any given morning, you might share a Blue Bottle coffee with the CEO of Blue Bottle. The founding designers of our sister magazine *Wired* keep a place here. Trump's ambassador to Greenland (at least until he becomes its governor) is said to be a neighbour.

And there's Hastings, the unassuming 64-year-old Netflix founder and snowboarder who purchased Powder Mountain out of a nine-figure debt hole in 2023, only two months after leaving the company he started. Hastings had first come to Powder Mountain after "the Vail empire," as he described it, purchased his home mountain of Park City in 2014. "They put in a bunch of lifts, and it got supercrowded and that was just the push out for us," Hastings tells me. His wife, Patty, got hit by another skier around that time, he says. They sold their place in downtown Park City, until recently home of the Sundance Film Festival, and moved to Powder Mountain in 2021.

"This thing's going down and we'd rather have you as owner."

Hastings had an early inkling of the industry-wide chaos that burst into full view last Christmas when Park City ski patrollers went on strike over their $21 per hour pay. They ground the resort to a standstill during what should have been some of its busiest weeks of the year. Queues stretched to the horizon; iPhones recorded the injustice. For many well-heeled holidaymakers, Christmas was, in fact, ruined. (Vail has since given the patrollers a rise.)

When Hastings built his home at Powder Mountain, it was still a hidden gem of a mom-and-pop ski area that was overshadowed by Utah's more famous ski meccas Alta and Snowbird. At the time, it was owned and run by the Summit Series leadership conference, which had purchased the mountain as a base and event hub in 2013. Summit Series set the tone for Powder Mountain as a community of fun-loving entrepreneurs with a flare for Scandinavian architecture, but it ran the mountain into the ground as a business.

In March 2023, Hastings says the Summit founders approached him. “This thing’s going down and we’d rather have you as owner,” Hastings recalls one of the Summit people telling him. “I thought about it for about five minutes.”

Hastings invited Summit alum Alex Zhang to come back as his chief creative officer. Zhang hired Four Seasons designers Champalimaud Design for a new 50,000 sq ft lodge and spa that will break ground this summer. And he commissioned a sweeping art project on the public side of the mountain that will eventually include a Turrell Ganzfeld. Zhang and Hastings bonded over their tours of Japan’s art islands Naoshima and Teshima. “These places become real destinations,” Hastings tells me. The question for him was: “How do we use this opportunity to make this an incredible place of beauty?”

$26

Starting hourly wage for ski patrol at Powder.

Zhang took me on a tour of both the residential and public sides of the mountain. We rang a bronze bell by the industrial artist Davina Semo, installed in a handsome stand of firs off the Paradise lift (public), and saw a work in progress by artist EJ Hill, who is hanging carousel horses from the cables of a chairlift (also public).

We drank bone broth at Blue’s, a café (private) built on the back of a snowcat and developed by Liam Goslett, a creative director at the film production company A24 who Zhang hired. One of Zhang’s friends designed the watering holes (private): tree-mounted cabinets hidden in the woods that will allow neighbours to ski up and pour themselves a drink.

“Reed was like, Just buy the art,” Zhang says. At Zhang’s suggestion, they established the nonprofit Powder Art Foundation.

You can see the vision starting to come together. It’s a place where the privacy sold to the super rich might underwrite a better experience for the people who saved up to visit. Hastings upgraded the Paradise lift to a high-speed quad, cutting the journey time to the summit from 16 minutes to seven, and announced plans to run another lift up Lightning Ridge that will give the public access to what was formerly a secret backcountry area.

Management’s only unbreakable rule is: don’t mess with the Powder Keg, the much-loved mountain dive bar where locals still dance on the tables at the end of the night. “It’s creating a place that I want to be part of the community for the next 30 years,” Hastings tells me. “The thing that pulled me in was the uncrowded skiing, but then as you get to know everyone up here, they’re all like, Oh, we want to ski here until we’re 90.”

PRIVATE SKIING MIGHT BE having a moment, but the concept isn’t new. A 1970 *Sports Illustrated* article, “A Cold Country Club for the Real Cool Crowd,” noted that “nowhere are people more underfoot than on the ski slopes of the crowded north-east and, suddenly, here is the Windham Mountain Club.” A Windham club-invitation card published in the story was refreshingly candid: “The historical American solution to the rapid growth of participation sport has been the private club concept. Those persons of more than nominal means who desire to enjoy a sport to its fullest have joined together to control the number and attractiveness of their associates.”

Windham, two hours north of New York, was popular with the Kennedy-and-Skakel set in the ’60s and ’70s, but it spent most of the intervening half century as a regular public ski area and is currently on the Ikon pass. Two years ago, though, Windham announced a new residential club with exclusive dining, valet, clubhouse, and season tickets for members. CEO Chip Seamans told me he’d explored a partnership with private helicopter service Blade, but the resort was holding off until it could be sure that the charters from Manhattan wouldn’t be too disruptive. “Plenty of places to land a helicopter,” he says, of the mountain.

The blueprint for modern private skiing is the Yellowstone Club. Founded in 1997 by Tim Blixseth, a colourful Oregon-bred timber magnate and property developer with multiple bankruptcies under his belt, the YC, as it’s known, was mankind’s first attempt to put an entire Rocky Mountain behind a velvet rope. The club has reportedly attracted some high-profile members, such as Bill Gates, Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel, and Tom Brady and then wife Gisele Bündchen.

“We joined because it was an awesome place to ski,” says the adult son of an investment banker who spoke to me while skiing with his mother at the YC. “For the first several years we were here – maybe until the mid-noughties – there was no lodge.” If skiers from the adjoining Big Sky Resort had wanted to sneak into the YC, the lifts didn’t even have scanners. “I remember thinking that maybe people didn’t know how easy it was.” The son now lives in Montana where he works as an aspiring ski-and-mountain guide.

The YC has changed a lot over the 20 years that the family has been going there. The club went bankrupt in 2008 and then struggled through a thicket of legal battles before emerging into profitability under the Arizona-based Discovery Land Company. Today, the Yellowstone Club is well-run but has lost some of its early charm, according to the son. His mother is selling her house and moving on. “It’s crowded with all these people who don’t really care that much about skiing,” says the son. Not that it stops them from getting out there. “Over Christmas, you might have half-hour lines for the lifts.”

Discovery Land Company has apparently noticed the increased interest, too, and is adding 35 condo units to Yellowstone. In 2022, the developer, which owns more than 30 clubs and residential communities around the world, invested in Homewood Mountain Resort on the shores of Lake Tahoe, in California. In 2023, it filed plans to turn Stagecoach, a defunct ski area near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, into a five-lift, 800-home private ski club. After announcing its intention to take Homewood private, a massive, local backlash prompted Discovery to backtrack. Now Homewood’s home page says, “Smile, Homewood Will Always Be Public.”

IF YOU WERE looking to hide one of America’s largest private ski clubs, you couldn’t do much better than the naturally secluded folds of land that hold Wasatch Peaks Ranch. It sits across the Ogden Valley from Powder, and from the outside, all that’s visible of Wasatch Peaks Ranch’s 20-square-mile expanse is the tip of a tower crane and a few of the lifts. Though it is still in development, Wasatch Peaks Ranch is, my sources agreed, the most coveted membership in private skiing.

The place has a reputation for secrecy. The club’s CEO, Gale “Tiger” Shaw III, a champion college skier at Dartmouth, two-time Olympian at Sarajevo ’84 and Calgary ’88, and until recently president of US Ski & Snowboard, didn’t return emails. “There are a number of members as you imagine who require [discretion], and it’s part of the programme to make it super comfortable to all members so they can enjoy the privacy of the club,” a Park City venture capitalist, who’s a member, told me.

Another person close to the project explained WPR in more detail: “It’s like Alta stacked on top of Deer Valley.” (Translation: the best skiing in Utah on top of the state’s most luxurious groomed-run paradise.) The upper mountain is entirely above the tree line. In the autumn, elk roam the forests, and the first rounds of golf were played last summer on the 18-hole course designed by famed architect Tom Fazio. The club prohibits posting on social media, and to date, the only reporting about WPR has been in *The Salt Lake Tribune* and based mostly on now outdated SEC filings, county records, and court documents. Like the ones that arose after a Black Hawk helicopter dropped a chairlift tower

$7
A beer at the permanently public Powder Keg.

while building the main Diamond Peak lift ahead of the Covid winter of 2021–22. Nobody said building a private ski area would be easy.

Wasatch Peaks Ranch, which was started in part as an antidote to the Yellowstone Club, is owned by a consortium of member families, the source close to the project told me. They said that the county has approved its application for 750 housing units, but the club will cap membership at 450 families. They're about half full, and each member family went through a multi-month, multigenerational vetting process, the person adds, describing something that sounded to me like a Park Avenue co-op board interview, fraternity rush, and *90 Day Fiancé* rolled into one.

> “They're being extremely thoughtful about the culture.”

“You only get to build the community once, and they're being extremely thoughtful about the culture,” said this source. “They actively turn away people who are very financially qualified.” Wasatch Peaks Ranch members “could be your next-door neighbour,” a former employee told me. “You'd have no idea. I mean, nobody was there to flash anything.”

One semi-pro skier who recently visited WPR as a guest explained the experience to me. “I carried my skis into the building, which I very quickly learned is not what you do. They looked at me appalled. You don't carry your skis. It's a whole thing,” said the guest.

“There's free hand warmers. You have to sign a waiver – no photos, no GPS tracking, no video, no media. They're very clear about that.” (Despite the prohibition, WPR shows up on fitness tracker Strava.)

After check-in, an airport-style shuttle drives you to the resort, where a gondola takes you to a mid-mountain lodge (which is in a marquee for now, though construction will begin on a permanent structure this summer). Once you're on the mountain, an app serves as your trail map and your lift pass to access the high-speed heated bubble quads. “There was plenty of terrain to be had, but you could also just be on groomed blues,” said the guest. The ski patrol, they added, “have got the best job in the entire world. There's nobody there! They're just skiing blower pow.”

The guest estimated there were 50 or 60 people there. Three-generation families with an East Coast vibe, wearing Ivy League business-school jumpers. "It felt like money didn't exist. We went for lunch and a random person just walked up to me and asked me what I wanted for lunch, and I told them and then it just came out."

"There were a lot more people watching football in the lodge than skiing," the guest recalled. "It felt like where those people could go to be normal."

Sounds like paradise. But a tasteful, intentionally dull paradise. It was hard to understand what all the secrecy was about.

"Why people hide from the press I have no idea," the venture capitalist told me. "I guess they are fearful of another book like *Billionaire Wilderness* coming out."

And then he surprised me: "Are you around Friday to ski?"

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SINCE HE MENTIONED it... *Billionaire Wilderness* is the 2020 book-length study on the residents of Teton County, Wyoming, and the Yellowstone Club, written by Justin Farrell, a Wyoming native and professor of sociology at the Yale School of the Environment. The book encompasses journalism, data analysis, and a qualitative ethnographic study of the effects of the ultra-wealthy on local communities and environmental conservation. But the thing that makes it such a memorably blistering critique is the earnestness of Farrell as a mustachioed, cowboy-booted Jane Goodall, dutifully observing the wealthiest primates the planet has ever produced. "Why do they emulate the rural working poor?" he writes. "Why do they love Wrangler jeans?"

"I've been reporting that book my whole life," Farrell told me. "As a kid, I just saw things happening. I saw hotels going up. I saw friends moving out. I saw new ski resorts expanding. I saw agricultural land disappearing."

A popular move among the billionaires flocking to low-income-tax Western states is to buy up property adjacent to their homes through conservation arrangements, which are tax write-offs for agreeing to keep land undeveloped in perpetuity. Conservation arrangements have exacerbated housing shortages for service workers and extended their long, dangerous commutes while allowing landowners to guiltlessly freeze development at the exact moment they personally arrived.

Farrell was initially welcomed into Yellowstone (thanks, mostly, he writes, to his Yale affiliation). But when he used publicly available tax data to find out who had houses in the club and wrote them polite letters inviting them to be interviewed, he became persona non grata. Some of those who did agree to be interviewed felt personally attacked by the book, according to Farrell, but others email him to ask for advice about how to be better environmentalists and community members, which he routinely gives. Some ski-town problems are intractable. Others can be fixed if people want to fix them.

"If you're there, you see it very clearly," said Farrell. "The way that this culture is romanticised but not supported."

IN NEW ENGLAND, a Goldman Sachs alum (and college-era friend of mine) had recently returned from skiing at the Hermitage, as a guest. "Well, Hermi-*tazh,* first of all," she corrected me.

The Vermont ski area, formerly known as Haystack Mountain, was converted to a members' club in 2011 but struggled to comply with – OK, the owners flouted – environmental regulations and went bankrupt in 2019. Again, developing private ski areas may seem fashionable at the moment, but it's a risky business. The Hermitage's general manager,

"How do we make this an incredible place of beauty?"

Bill Benneyan, explained to me that, in 2020, about 200 homeowners of the defunct mountain "came together, pooled their money, said, 'Let's buy all the assets and figure out how to operate this thing sustainably as a member-owned, member-governed nonprofit.'" The initiation fee is $100,000, and annual fees are between $19,000 and $20,000, and unlike the Western clubs, members need not buy a home to join.

The club has a 90,000 sq ft timber-framed lodge and four lifts, but "it doesn't look like a ski resort," my friend told me. "That is, you're in nature and there are homes scattered throughout. You don't really go out without instructors. Everyone is paired up and there are people watching, making sure you're OK."

Everyone is on a first-name basis, she says, and everything is heated. "You sit down on the chairlift; it's heated."

The amenities fall somewhere between "ridiculously nice" and "over the top." "They have an arcade and a movie theatre. Kids are walking around without their shoes. And I'm used to living out of our ski bags. I kept trying to reach back into my bag, and then somebody would come by and be like, 'Let me take that for you.' They don't want to see bags around. They want you to feel like you're in someone's living room."

A theme was emerging. Just as at Powder and the country's most elite golf and social clubs, once you're inside, the illusion that everything is on the house is carefully maintained. "You can't pay for anything," she said. "There's candy everywhere, and it keeps racking up on somebody's bill, but I don't know how."

The fantasy of communitarianism is lovely for adults, who have a sense of reality and the value of service work, to engage in on holiday. But does never letting your children carry their own skis risk breeding entitlement?

"We are raising our children differently," my friend said, "and liked it that they didn't know what the word *valet* meant until we got to Vermont."

"The kids, when their parents aren't watching, are definitely in charge," she continued. "They were going up to the fancy part of the coffee shop, getting these fancy hot chocolates, bringing them out to their friends who weren't allowed to have them. I was just imagining what it would be like once the bar opened."

Maybe they'll make really gracious hosts and dinner dates one day. (Benneyan noted that the teenage kids often become assistant instructors.) And about those valets: when they returned my friend's car, they'd organised it, cleaned the windows, and squared away the kids' debris in the back seat. "I was like, what happened? It's cleaner than when I left it. It was amazing."

AT POWDER MOUNTAIN, I took a couple of cat laps with the members. It hadn't snowed in weeks and the warm, windy storm the previous day had blown about four inches of styrofoam snow into the basin we were skiing in. It skied better than it had any right to but still served as proof that you can bring the most thoughtfully curated group of people to the most carefully preserved terrain, but Mother Nature will still have the final say on whether the skiing is any good.

There's something about Powder that, once you've been there, makes it difficult to dismiss the concept of private ski mountains. Maybe it's that you actually can buy taste. Maybe it's that the excess is paying for nature and anonymity, things many of us can get (relatively) cheaply. Or maybe it's just really hard to argue with the purity of the desire to ski powder.

As the semi-pro skier, who was recently a guest at Wasatch, put it: "I don't know how I feel about private ski resorts and the amount of wealth that goes into it in general. But I had a harder time feeling gross about it after. I dunno if that's because the skiing was so good or it wasn't as obnoxious as I was expecting it to be. You can understand it."

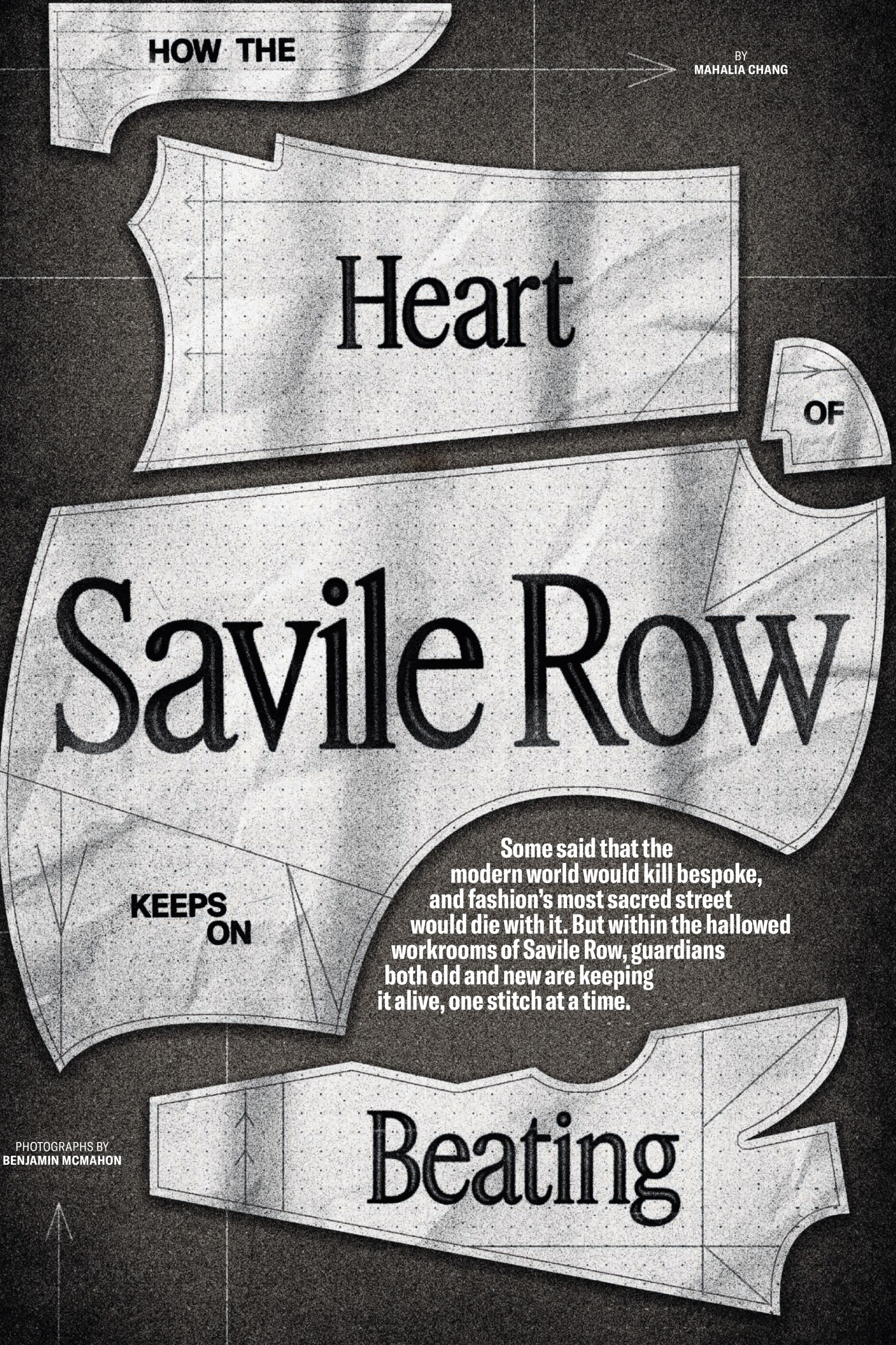
I could understand it too, though truthfully, I was still hunting for some exceptional skiing.

I took shelter from an early February rainstorm at the Hinds Country Store, in Peterson. A trucker-hatted ski patroller still wearing his avalanche beacon was filling up his white Wasatch Peaks Ranch F150. "You guys getting snow up there," I ask? "It's snowing on top," he replies. "But about mid-mountain it's turning to hail." Lousy, in other words.

Even Wasatch Peaks Ranch was no match for the weather. And as for the Park City venture capitalist who invited me to ski there, I did the right thing and turned him down. This story would come out and everyone at WPR would know whose guest I was. "I'd hate for you to get yourself crosswise with Tiger and the other members for hosting a reporter," I told him.

And who knows what's in store for me. America seems to have no plans to redistribute the snow in the near future, but if I play my cards right I might still, somehow, find an extra $10 mil somewhere. And then I'll need a few friends on the inside who can vouch for my sterling character.

GRAYSON SCHAFFER *lives and skis in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA.*

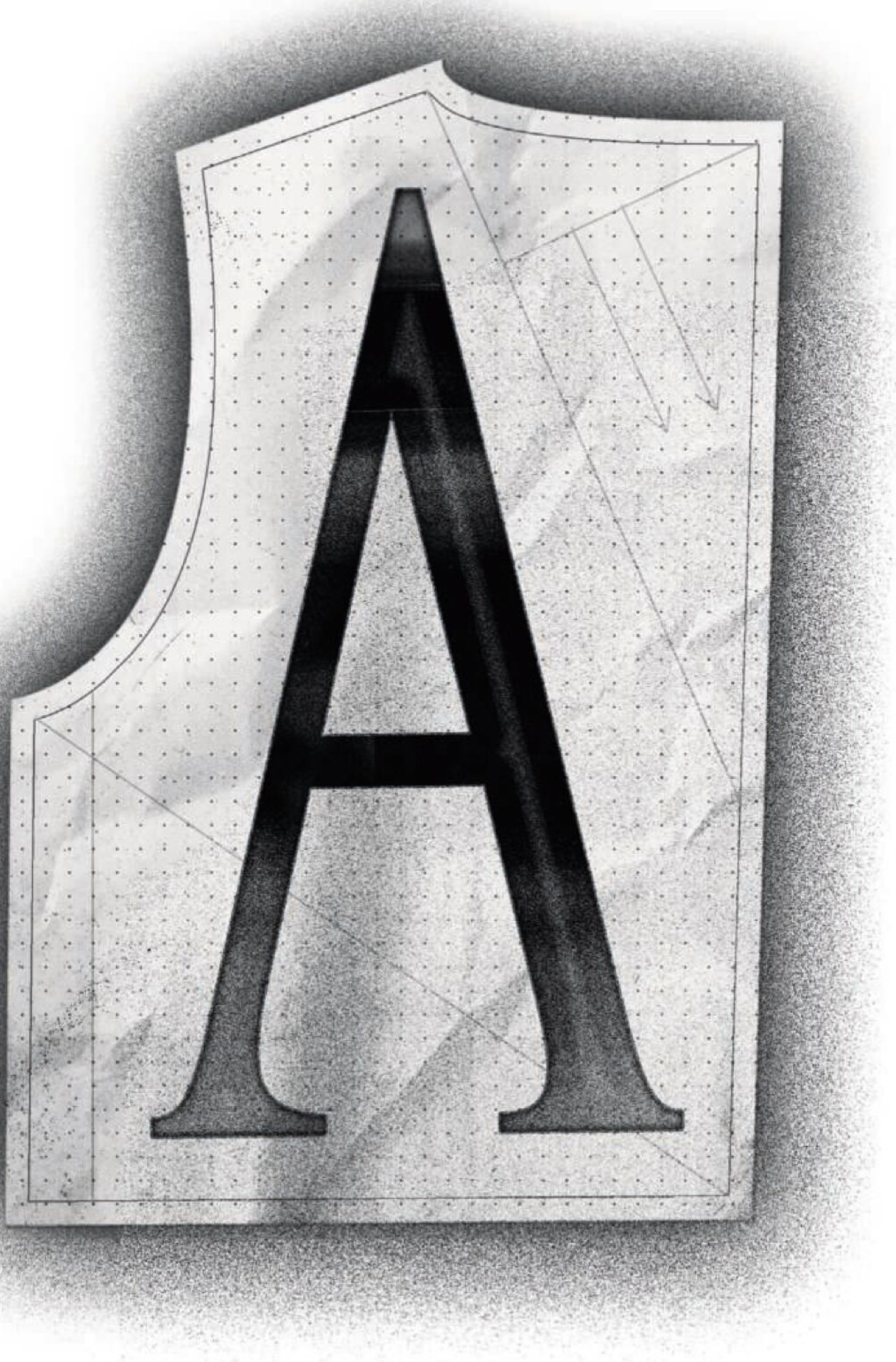


HOW THE Heart OF Savile Row KEEPS ON Beating

BY
MAHALIA CHANG

Some said that the modern world would kill bespoke, and fashion's most sacred street would die with it. But within the hallowed workrooms of Savile Row, guardians both old and new are keeping it alive, one stitch at a time.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
BENJAMIN MCMAHON



A Savile Row suit begins with a lot of questions. This is by design. The word *bespoke* comes from the defunct *bespeak*, meaning "spoken about" or "arranged". To have something made bespoke means to have had a universe of conversations before a pair of scissors is ever picked up.

What do you do for work? Do you travel? Where are you visiting? Are you active? Do you run hot? And those are just the questions asked aloud. During the consultation, your tailor – more specifically, your cutter, who does the pattern-making – will make a thousand silent observations. How you walk, how your shoulders relax, the way you lean, the way you slide your glasses into your pocket. From there, you'll decide on fabric (from over 6,000 choices), buttons, lapel width, hem length, what pockets you'd like and where. Nearly 50 different measurements will be taken; a few weeks later, you'll come in for a second fitting, where they'll take more.

End to end, it takes between eight and 12 weeks, including around 60 hours of work in the hands of five or six people, to make a single suit. The cost for this process starts at around £6,000. The price tag is steep – as much as a really good holiday, or a really average used car – but not without cause. Simon Cundey, the managing director of Henry Poole & Co, likens tailors to estate agents, able to read a brief of needs and wants, and then deliver the right options. "You know, 'I've got the perfect house for you: three bedrooms, half an acre' – we do the same thing in fabrics," he says. Dominic Sebag-Montefiore, creative director of Edward Sexton, thinks there's a touch of the sommelier in there, too: "It's like when you go to a fancy restaurant and you're greeted with this biblical wine list, then the sommelier comes over. 'Oh, well, if you like that, have you tried this?'" Huntsman's Taj Phull places it somewhere in between a mathematician and a vibe reader, where body language and energy influence the tape measure just as much as size and shape.

Maybe it's because of this complexity that bespoke is still considered so sacred within Savile Row, even if its popularity has long been eclipsed by ready-to-wear. "It's the pinnacle," says Campbell Carey, creative director and head cutter at Huntsman. "We're all dead set on keeping it the jewel in the crown. It's like a Stradivarius violin. Only one person in the world can tune it."

And like a Stradivarius, bespoke can be unattainable for most people. The clothing industry is accelerating, fuelled by hype-based collab culture and disposable fast fashion. The very point of the suit seems to have shifted – few workplaces demand it as a uniform. When you do see young guys in three-piece suits, they're either menswear-heads in *American Psycho* cosplay, or working front-of-house.

Yet inside the old world of Savile Row, the tailors are adapting, in an effort to safeguard the slow, necessary, exquisite art of bespoke. They're no longer just turning out stiff-shouldered military jackets and CEO uniforms; their wares now include softly draping separates, leisurewear, tracksuits, even T-shirts. Both the area's staff and its buyers are getting younger, and a new generation – cooler, in it for love of the craft – is taking the reins of an industry many thought would go gently into that good night, fighting for the history and skills enshrined by its cutters, coatmakers and trimmers. The lines of defence are holding steady.

HENRY POOLE & CO was the first of the now-legendary tailors to set up premises on Savile Row, when, in 1846, Poole opened up another entrance at the back of his family's Old Burlington Street store. Anderson & Sheppard and Huntsman landed later, in the early 1900s. Other legacy tailors eventually followed: Gieves & Hawkes in 1975; Davies & Son in 1986; Dege & Skinner in 1989.

It's tempting to think of the Row as being frozen in time, an unwavering monument to the past. The reality is that it has been constantly and consistently growing since the beginning. The '60s and '70s brought in a new generation with Edward Sexton and Tommy Nutter, who dressed rock stars instead of royals, and the '90s saw in Ozwald Boateng and Richard James, leaders of the area's radical "New Bespoke Movement". The modern era has been fruitful, too. Knatchbull, the Row's sole women's-only tailor, arrived in 2019. Thom Sweeney, who does relaxed weekendwear as well as traditional tailoring, moved into Old Burlington Street in 2020, and two years later bespoke streetwear label Clothsurgeon took over the Row's vacant number 40. Nowadays, the street and its adjoining roads are also home to a range of non-bespoke businesses: incisively cool menswear empire Drake's; Connolly, which has managed to combine heritage leather with sensual and drapey leisurewear; and English bagmakers Bennett Winch, font of tobacco-coloured suede holdalls and leather briefcases.

Savile Row now offers something for almost everyone: ready-to-wear (clothes bought complete from the store), made-to-measure (cut to your dimensions, but based on a pre-existing style), and bespoke (the design and specifications are dictated by and are exclusive to you). There also exists a level known as "pure bespoke", where everything – fittings, cutting, tailoring and alterations – is done on

Previous page: a cutter working at Edward Sexton. *Opposite, clockwise from top left*: a tailor at Edward Sexton; cutting in the workshop there; Simon Cundey and a colleague at Henry Poole & Co; the Henry Poole workshop.

POOLE & CO.
TAILORS

the premises, instead of being outsourced. This is considered by many in the business to be the truest offering on the Row.

The changing wares on offer reflect how far modern menswear has shifted. Workplaces have been getting gradually more casual, one gilet-and-chino-wearing banker bro at a time. During the pandemic, office attendance – one of the few reasons to wear a suit for many men – plummeted. (Though it seems to now be rising again.) These days, the average London worker goes into the office around 2.7 days a week, according to a study by the Centre for Cities released last year. Many tailoring businesses saw their older clientele retire over the Covid period. Mass migration to the 'burbs was another blow. ("A lot of [our American clients] decided to move to Florida, where they wear shorts and T-shirts all day," said one tailor.) For the pessimist, it might have looked like tailoring was dying a slow death, the workboards of cutters starting to gather dust.

The funeral bells weren't necessary, though. As the old boys left, new ones popped by: younger, international, more likely to work in tech, swapping said gilet-and-chino combos for hand-cut three-pieces. The historical customers are still there, but now, there are some new faces. The tailors couldn't be happier about it.

Cundey is the seventh generation of Poole men to work at Henry Poole & Co. I meet him inside the brand's shop at number 15 Savile Row, where gold-framed royal warrants hang on the pine-green walls, over glass display boxes filled with tie stiffeners and glinting cufflinks. "You go into department stores these days, the guy doesn't know the difference between a linen and a wool," says Cundey. "You know, 'This is the latest one that's come through this week. This is the size. Go try it.' The difference in the dynamics of buying things these days is knowledge."

It explains why word of mouth is still the Row's biggest advertiser – even with younger customers. "We're very much a referral business. People say, 'Go and see Henry Poole. Go and see my tailor, Simon,'" says Cundey.

But there is no word of mouth if the store experience leaves you wanting. It's the reason every store is warm and plush. The reason you're always greeted by a man in a suit, and never one in a graphic tee and a chore jacket. It's the private club rooms, the lack of closing hours, the top-shelf whisky always underneath the counter. For clients whose net worths often top Forbes lists ("It's not millionaires any more, it's billionaires," says one tailor), customer service is its own sport.

Although word of mouth is also king for the immense Anderson & Sheppard, customers now find them in all sorts of ways. The brand's clientele has included Fred Astaire, King Charles, Daniel Craig and Tom Ford. Rows of hanging patterns are illuminated under the domed skylight roof of its Old Burlington Street store, glowing gold in the sun. Director Anda Rowland nestles into the velvet couch in the front room and notes the rise of walk-ins. "There are more of what we call 'chance customers', the people who've done their own research," she says.

Fifty years ago, the stores on the Row used to hang curtains in the windows; the only way to enter was with a recommendation from an existing client. The curtains have been down for decades, but for many, imagined drapery still blocks them from view.

"People just assume it's rich businessmen, which it's absolutely not," says Rowland. "Once someone says 'Right, I'm going in,' they'll find it's a very welcoming, friendly space. But the trouble is the curtain – the mental curtain. It's pretty heavy."

Inside number 35, Edward Sexton's rock'n'-roll pedigree has got Harry Styles, Mick Jagger and Elton John on the books. The suits come in an array of velvet jewel tones, and hang above dark parquet floors and alongside artworks of cigarette butts crowded into ashtrays.

It's a different vibe across the road, though, where Sexton hosts its bespoke appointments upstairs, busy workrooms surrounded by warm wood-panelled walls.

"The design process is a two way conversation," says Sebag-Montefiore, one of the youngest creative directors on the street. "It's not designers sitting in an ivory tower."

Those conversations, he says, can only happen inside stores with soul. There's no joy in shopping just to be served by "people staring at iPads, with algorithms telling CRMs when to hit customers with what products." Indifference, he tells me, is a cancer infecting retail.

"There's been this talk of the high street dying. The high street is dying because it's full of people who don't care. I'm not a believer in saying, 'Poor me'; neither was Edward [Sexton]," he says. "The brand isn't about that. It's saying, 'If we want a bricks and mortar shop to work, we need to give people a really good reason to come here.'"

Left: a tailor cutting a garment at Henry Poole & Co. *Above*: tools of the trade.

Above: Luke Sweeney and Thom Whiddett of Thom Sweeney.

Sebag-Montefiore thinks that reason is the staff. “Made-to-measure businesses [are] selling options,” he says. “Whereas great tailors are selling expertise. At the end of the day, tailoring is really in millimetres.”

A spin around Thom Sweeney’s new London store feels like walking through the wardrobe of your coolest friend’s coolest friend. The four-storey shop was renovated in 2020 as a monument to tailoring – perfectly fitted separates, luxe knits, Italian-inspired suits. To founders Thom Whiddett and Luke Sweeney, this idea of new luxury is connected to its finiteness. With the clothes being made on the premises, “you can only make so many bespoke garments a year,” says Sweeney. The brand produces around 70 bespoke pieces a month globally, and some of the bigger businesses on the Row, like Anderson & Sheppard, make up to 1,000 per year. “We call bespoke the heartbeat of the business,” Sweeney says. “It’s the first thing we talk about when a new customer comes in.”

Down the road at number 1, Gieves & Hawkes commands a cavernous new store, including a large open-plan ready-to-wear department, a winding bespoke floor and an arm for its dazzling military uniforms. Inside, managing director Jason Gerrard sits in the shadow of the cherry-red coats of the Gentlemen at Arms and their plumed helmets. (“They used to be swan, but goose feathers stay whiter for longer.”)

> “Made-to-measure businesses are selling options, whereas tailors are selling expertise.”
>
> **—DOMINIC SEBAG-MONTEFIORE**

The whole space is evocative by design. “We’ve been desensitised to the fact that buying clothing is actually emotionally connected. It can excite you. It can make you feel great. It can change you,” says Gerrard. “That emotional attachment, particularly bespoke level, [is because] that tailor is creating something that’s yours and yours uniquely.”

THROUGH THE DOUBLE-HEIGHT windows at Edward Sexton, weak winter sun is spilling onto the side-by-side workboards of coatmaker Henry Humphreys. His apprentice, Charlie Norman, a 24-year-old in a distressed graphic T-shirt, watches silently beside him. In nearly every workroom on the Row, 20-somethings mix in with old hands, training as apprentices. They’ll work under a master for up to five years before they choose a speciality and graduate into regular work as coatmakers, trouser-cutters or trimmers. (“They say it takes five years,” says Matthew Borkowski, a cutter at Anderson & Sheppard. “Five years doesn’t make you a cutter. It just makes you able to draft a pattern.”) Despite the call of starrier careers in fashion or design, jobs on the Row are highly sought-after and the waiting lists can stretch on for months. Downstairs at one house, an apprentice lowers her voice to tell me she had all her friends keep an ear out for positions on the Row, and had dropped everything to be the first in line when her current role opened up.

This page: cutting takes place at Thom Sweeney. *Opposite*: a tailor at Henry Poole & Co.

> "If you're bored of repetition, then you're in the wrong game. This is everything you do. Could I have improved that little stitch? It may be unnoticeable to most people. But you can see it."
>
> **—DAVIDE TAUB**

Today, Norman is learning the subtleties and specifics of facing – the method of finishing a jacket's lapel and collar – something that will take him weeks to master. "When you go through your 20s, you think it's really difficult," says Humphreys, who, at 70, has been on the Row for more than 50 years. "Once you know a bit more, then you enjoy it. It's not art but… it's very close."

The length of the apprenticeship gives you the skills, but it also builds a connection to the work that's meant to last you a lifetime. "You take things personally," Gieves & Hawkes' head cutter Davide Taub tells me later, pointing to his workboard, where, in between scraps of grey Prince of Wales check and straight pins, a coat is coming to life. "It's like a little bit of you is going out of the door, as well. Often it's like, 'Oh my God, this wasn't good enough'. But then hopefully, a few months later, when the customer comes back wearing it, [you say] 'That was better than I remember.'"

There is no place to hide, adds Taub. "If you're bored of repetition, then you're in the wrong game. This is everything you do. Could I have improved that little stitch? It may be unnoticeable to most people's eyes. But it's you. You can see it."

Others can see it, too, points out Patrick Murphy, a cutter at Davies & Son, one of the smallest and oldest businesses in the area. Despite the brand's long and storied history, Davies is not precious about it. Inside the small store at number 38 is an original suit made for King Edward VIII, displayed next to the bolts of fabric and button samples, there to touch. Unlike the other businesses, who may employ 20 or 30 full-time staff, Davies has just three. After the death of their on-staff tailor, they are currently outsourcing to freelancers, of whom there are many renting workboards in various studios on the Row.

Davies is, by far, the friendliest tailor on the Row – not just by its own observation ("Whenever there's a function for Savile Row, everybody ends up here," says Murphy, in his charming east London accent) but by the sheer number of people who duck their heads in to say hello.

Tailors on the Row are known for jumping between businesses. Murphy worked at Huntsman and Dege & Skinner before returning home to Davies. "We've trained each other," says Murphy. "It is a community." They know each other – for better or for worse.

Murphy tells a story of the Golden Shears Awards, where apprentices are invited to submit a work of tailoring to be blind-judged by Row veterans. One year, there came a suit that was the clear winner, sublime in cut and make. Except it was a little *too* perfect. Murphy recognised it not as the work of the apprentice, but of the old boy they worked under. "I'd known his work for 20 years – fucking beautiful. And I knew he had made it," he says. "Do me a favour!" In the end, Murphy declined to score that student. Instead, his favourite work from that year was a "cream cashmere jacket, a lady's overcoat, that this girl had made; she did all the stitching herself, and there were faults in it, here and there. It was honest. It was genuine." Murphy gave it his highest score.

The point being: the learning, the honest-to-God bodily act of learning, is sacred. On Savile Row, there are no shortcuts.

Left: the final touches at Henry Poole & Co. *Opposite, clockwise from top left*: Savile Row streetwear at Clothsurgeon; founders Parv and Rav Matharu; inside at Huntsman; Campbell Carey, Huntsman's head cutter.

THE ROW HAS always traded in history. The shopfronts of the old guard are filled with relics: portraits of royalty, signed memorabilia, black and white photos of cobbled streets and horses and carts. At Davies & Son, Murphy flips through the old log books to point out the names of former clients: "The Duke of Windsor… F Scott Fitzgerald… Sergei Rachmaninoff… Oswald Mosley – yeah, the fascist!"

Tailoring

Tailoring

But if history is king, so is evolution. Over at number 11, Huntsman has made an art out of it. In the wake of the *Kingsman* movie franchise – which based its fictional headquarters on the store – the brand has grown into a modern behemoth. Under managing director Phull, a self-confessed sneakerhead and car enthusiast, the brand has launched a range of collabs: custom uniforms for sushi chef Endo Kazutoshi, sunglasses with EB Meyrowitz, candles with Jo Malone, and bespoke Formula 1–inspired interiors for Gordon Murray Automotive's T.50. On the shop floor, you're as likely to see a 15-year-old taking pictures as you are an eight-figure CEO. "Young kids come in just to have a look around and go to the *Kingsman* room. [We] have to treat them thinking that, 'OK, this child is 15 now; in 10 years' time he or she might create the next cryptocurrency that shoots off, or the next Amazon. And they'll remember where they went to get a suit," says Phull.

> "It's absolutely critical that the Row evolves. If we try to hold it back, that's when that industry collapses."
>
> **—JASON GERRARD**

Newcomers provide much-needed change, too. Streetwear label Clothsurgeon makes bomber jackets and joggers with the same reverence and attention to detail as a suit, and in equally luxurious fabrics (say, a track jacket made in Loro Piana cashmere). Rav and Parv Matharu, the couple behind the brand, had their minds set on joining Savile Row from the beginning. "We're not doing what the tailors that have been here for years and years do," says Parv. "They're great at that. They should do that, and we should do what we do. We bring a new clientele, and maybe a younger demographic that could have been intimidated before."

The arrival of Clothsurgeon marks not only the first streetwear business on Savile Row, but also the first South Asian–owned shop. "We're here to stay," adds Parv. "We want to be part of a community. It's not just about us, it's about everybody, the Row as a whole."

This year, much-loved shirtmaker Emma Willis will join the Row's community, setting

up shop on Old Burlington Street. In a new venture with tailor Caroline Andrew, Willis is opening a showroom where you can have your suit and shirt made at the same time, from the same measurements, something that builds upon the "experience of understanding" that comes with bespoke.

In addition to traditional shirtmaking, Willis also offers bespoke T-shirts, intimately measured and cut, and crafted by her almost entirely female-run atelier in Gloucester. Like Clothsurgeon, Willis is doing her bit to extend the idea of what both Savile Row and bespoke can be. "In the pandemic, when they didn't have to wear suits, [people] still wanted to buy beautiful clothes," says Willis. "They realised that you can buy bespoke but it doesn't have to be formal clothing. It can be casual."

For their part, the Row's cutters seem receptive to newcomers. As Gieves & Hawkes' Gerrard points out, these morsels of innovation have always powered bespoke: "Davies would have been new at some point. Huntsman would have been new at some point. And I'm sure when they arrived, the old guard turned their nose up. Now they are established members." Nor is the innovation reserved for new openings. Edward Sexton, for example, is working on a "digital tailoring" service, with which "wherever you are in the world, we can send clothes to you and have a video fitting," says Sebag-Montefiore. The process will combine samples with inbuilt tape measures, which can guide the tailor to fit the suit over video chat.

"It's absolutely critical that the Row evolves," says Gerrard. "If we try to hold it back, that's when that industry collapses. We must embrace that evolution, not be frightened by it."

Left: Jason Gerrard, managing director at Gieves & Hawkes. *Above*: Davies & Son cutter Patrick Murphy.

WHEN HENRY POOLE first opened in 1846, Queen Victoria was still on the throne. Over 180 years the brand has endured all sorts of obstacles, from changing production processes to changing climates. But modern times court modern problems. After triumphing in the battle of WFH leisurewear, it now faces off against the rise of fake bespoke, the cost of living crisis and spiralling rents.

The cost of premises on the Row, Cundey says, has exploded since luxury brands like Alexander McQueen set up shop in 2012. "Their rent and rates are very different," he says. "Once they set that precedent with a high rent, that sends a wave down the rest of the street. Alexander McQueen moved out in 2017, but the precedent was set."

If smaller tailoring businesses are unable to afford rents on the Row, the vacancies may be snapped up by companies for whom bespoke is less sacrosanct. Non-bespoke businesses on the Row are no issue – the likes of Connolly and Drake's are well-loved. It's the fakers that cause fury. "It's like Champagne," says Murphy, "Champagne can only come from the area in France. You can make the best sparkling wine two kilometres up the road, but it's not Champagne."

He points to ambiguous language or practices that give off the illusion of bespoke, but without the product. "The made-to-measure people, who get it all made in factories, use certain showrooms [on the Row]," he says. "But on their website, it will say 'So-and-So, Number Savile Row', as if it's [made at] their address. It's not. That bothers me."

But, while everyone agrees that the Row is changing, like any democracy, there's disagreement over what the street needs. Isabel Ettedgui of Connolly is in favour of a "shake-up" to add more luxury elements to raise the calibre of the street. "You would never lose Savile Row – it would change and morph into a different taste level," says Ettedgui, referencing London's Pavilion Road and Chiltern Street as success stories. "Bring in different things. It will make it a more interesting street."

Clockwise from top left: a tailor at Thom Sweeney; Anderson & Sheppard's workshop; pattern cutting; owner Isabel Ettedgui and retail director Ivan Calderon at Connolly.

> “A street address is just a street address. The power is in the skill. Who’s to say somebody who has trained 10 years and had to move shouldn’t be able to say that they’re the same quality?”
>
> **—ANDA ROWLAND**

Above: shirtmaker Emma Willis.

Anderson & Sheppard’s Rowland agrees. During Covid she led a tenants’ survey that called for more high-end restaurants and cafés to be allowed to open on the Row. She submitted this to The Pollen Estate, the company that owns the buildings which make up Savile Row. “I said to them, ‘Guys, you’ve got to get good food and beverage in here,’” she says. “‘You’ve got to [improve] dwell time.’ We need to keep the streets lively. We need services that people have to come back to.”

Bringing in new and different kinds of businesses could attract more footfall – meaning more customers for the tailors. “If we had a top, top, top coffee shop that turned into a bar, all the hotels could say to their customers, ‘Oh, you’re thinking of going for a drink, sir? Why don’t you go there? Because you can see the tailors working up and down,’” says Rowland. “You know, ‘I want to go [to Savile Row], and I want to buy a tie at the Drake’s store. And, oh, it’s five o’clock? I’ll get a martini across the road.’ Glitter, glitter, glossy, glossy.”

Rowland says that the company, “to their credit, listened to all of it.” Over email, The Pollen Estate told me their “aim is to nurture the heritage of Savile Row and the craftsmanship, whilst evolving with the times”, and also emphasised that “to support the successful evolution of Savile Row, new brands should align with the Row’s reputation of the highest quality, including the personalised customer experience.”

But outside the ready-to-wear influx and the debates over rents and bar openings, there is a through-line that seems to echo through the Row. From Gieves & Hawkes at number 1 to Connolly, tucked around the corner, the priority is the same: the protection of tailoring, and the protection of tailors.

“It’s so important that people understand that behind that façade [are] small, unique British companies that have been going for centuries,” says Gerrard. “And once that talent is gone, it’s gone. It’s not ever coming back.”

Rowland has her own idea. “The Champagne argument is tricky, because Champagne depends on the grape and the grape depends on the soil. The trouble here is that it’s not geographically dependent. Here it is skills,” she tells me. “A street address is just a street address. The power is in the skill. Who’s to say somebody who has trained 10 years and had to move because they can’t pay the rent shouldn’t be able to say that they’re the same quality?”

Rowland suggests that the right to call yourself Savile Row should be something earned, separate to real estate entirely. A peer-reviewed title bestowed by the Row’s own, from the King’s tailor, Malcolm Plews, to Henry Poole’s Cundey and Huntsman’s Carey. Something that speaks to the stitches and the moulding of the fabric, to the eternal necessity of imperfection that, for Murphy, shows it has been made by human hands.

But for now, the street is not going anywhere. Periods of change are inevitable – even a Stradivarius needs tuning from time to time – but the heart of the street beats on.

A Savile Row suit begins with questions. *What do you do for work? Do you travel? Where are you visiting?* The Row itself continues in the same way, like a back and forth conversation between cutter and client, perfecting the fit millimetre by millimetre. In the space between each stitch, questions asked even more quietly: *where to from here? How will it evolve next? Who will lead it?* Then the cutter draws his chalk lines, and the work begins anew.

MAHALIA CHANG *is* BRITISH GQ*’s style editor.*

Traddies. Throuples. OnlyFans. It's wild out there – so we asked *GQ*'s most dateable or loved-up (or love-hardened) connections to turn agony aunt, and navigate the questions that would make a therapist blush.

TWENTY VERY MODERN DATING QUESTIONS, ANSWERED BY VERY MODERN

Love Gurus

By
Josiah Gogarty

Illustrations by Daryl Rainbow

DATING'S A MINEFIELD THESE DAYS. *I'm in the Hinge trenches. I really dodged a bullet with her. We hooked up once, then he dropped off the radar.*

Many of us reach for the language of warfare when describing our relationship woes. Is this such a surprise? For the manifold faults of how our parents' generation got freaky, their rituals did offer a touch more certainty. You met someone you fancied – at work, a pub, a party – and asked them out. If they said yes, you went on dates, which led to a relationship, which led to marriage, which led, at terrifying speed, to two and a half kids and living in a suburban house for which you were seriously indebted.

But those certainties have been shattered. While throwing off the shackles of monogamy, heteronormativity and the rest is noble stuff, it has left many clueless as to etiquette – or, to continue the metaphor, feeling like a hapless soldier dodging sniper fire while wading through mud. How do you talk about consent without killing the mood? How do you open your relationship without torching the whole thing? Are dating apps a total blind alley? (Yes, says Ash Sarkar, co-host of the podcast *If I Speak*: "Let 2025 be the year you grow the fuck up, and take the risk of being a little bit embarrassed. Talk to people in real life.")

Here at *GQ*, we wouldn't be so arrogant as to issue a set of dating "rules". As Ana Kirova, CEO of the dating app Feeld, advises in regard to asking for someone's pronouns, "There's no one-size-fits-all approach, ever." So we've marshalled a premier line-up of modern love gurus – podcasters, writers, therapists, comedians and designers – who've thought deeply about this stuff (and in many cases are in healthy, self-actualised relationships of their own) to act as our personal agony aunts.

IS IT EVER OK TO SLEEP WITH COLLEAGUES?

"Sure it is," say Jordan Bowen and Luca Marchetto, the married design duo behind cult fashion brand JordanLuca. "We all need job satisfaction, so be ambitious about what you want, but set clear boundaries. Keep it sexy; keep it kinky; keep it cute – and stay professional! No need to spice up the Teams calls with any salacious rumours. If you need further advice on this, please send us an email and our team will happily give you some guidance." (Disclaimer: Be cool. Be discreet. And steal a glance at your HR handbook first.)

SHOULD I PAY FOR RAYA OR FEELD? IS ANYONE EVEN ON THE APPS ANY MORE?

Everyone *is* still on the apps, says Lothian-McLean, but almost no one likes using them. “The misattributed Einstein quote about the definition of insanity being to repeat unsatisfying behaviour and expecting a different outcome, applies here. If this medium is not serving your romantic hopes, do you think the same algorithmic experience with a slightly different interface (and higher price point) will change that? Once you have crossed the app-fatigue Rubicon, I think you could happen across your dream partner and still end up letting the conversation die.” Take a proper break. If you go back to them, limit your use to setting up physical dates, rather than juggling endless horny DMs that won’t ever go anywhere. But if you don’t have a specific dating goal, then why not just delete them for good? “Congrats genie, you’re free!”

HOW DO I TALK ABOUT CONSENT, BUT KEEP THINGS SEXY?

Let’s reframe things, says Feeld’s Ana Kirova: think of consent itself as sexy. “It might seem counter-intuitive, but any conversation around how far you can go together… will create a very curious and stimulating space, because of the possibility and intimacy it allows.” In the moment, keep things fluid, but direct. “It could be as simple as, ‘What do you want to try next?’ or ‘I’m all-in, let me know how far you want to go.’” Don’t think of gaining consent as an awkward moment. “It’s not a pause, it’s a power move.”

I’M INTERESTED IN OPENING OUR RELATIONSHIP – HOW SHOULD I ASK?

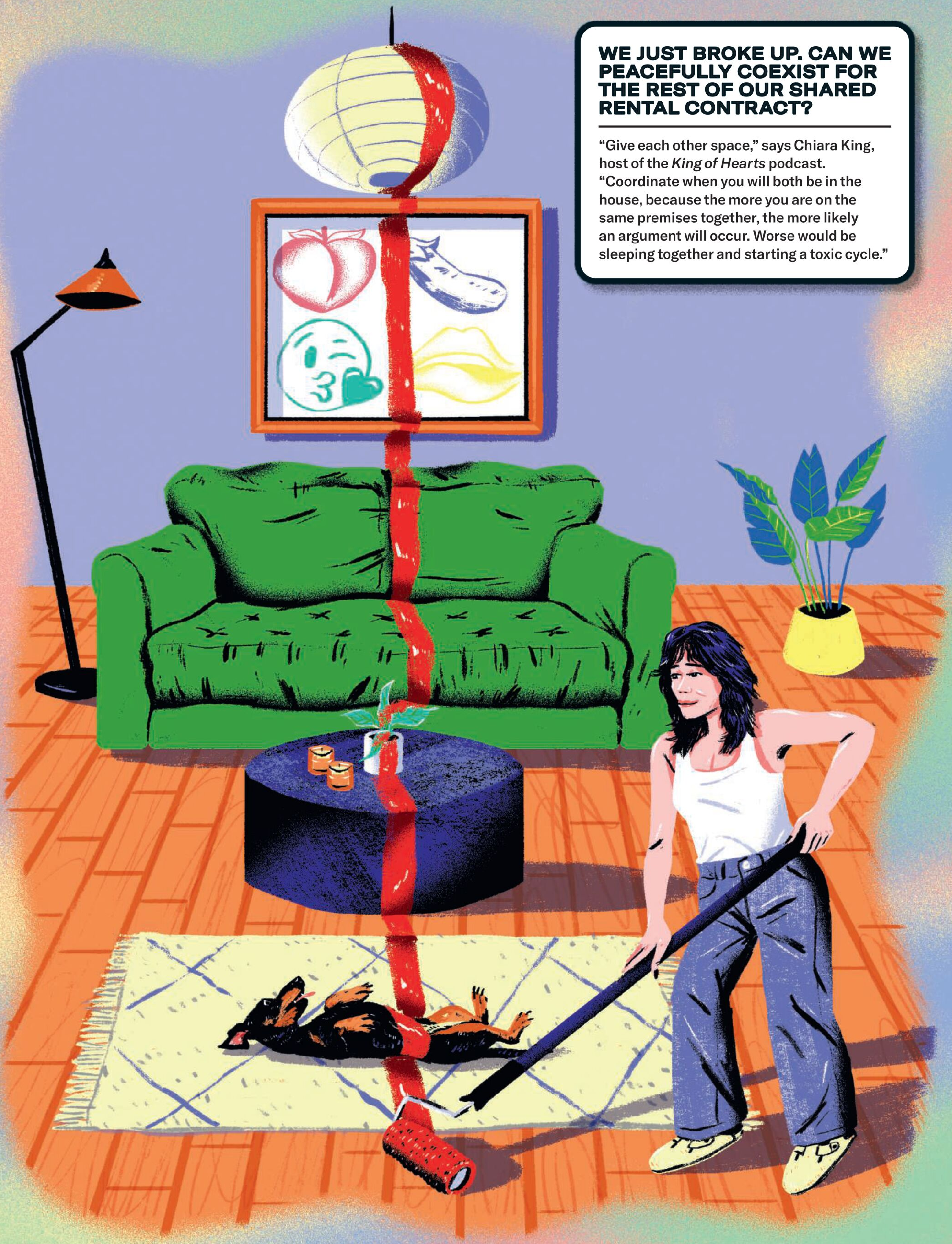
“Take it slow and steady,” says Kirova. “Start with knowing in your heart why you want this or what you’re curious about.” Also, be ready to accept whatever response your partner might have. “Choose a private moment, approach the conversation gently, and remember to acknowledge how much you value the relationship.” If they’re open to the idea, then start – slowly but steadily – discussing the boundaries of the arrangement. “Check in regularly to ensure both of you feel safe and heard.” If they’re not interested in, or ready for, an open relationship, accept that decision – then, if non-monogamy is what you’re really after, maybe get yourself on to Feeld to find someone who is into it.

HOW DO I TALK TO MY PARTNER ABOUT KINKS?

There’s no set rule here, says Annie Lord, *Vogue* dating columnist and author of *Notes on Heartbreak*: just talk to them. “Start by asking your partner about what they’re into and if there’s anything you could do more of – that way the conversation won’t feel as though it’s a criticism of them, and opens the door for more of a two-way discussion.” And don’t feel like you have to blurt out all your kinks in one go. “Start off with some small, easy things you like, as tame as asking them to pull your hair more.” Then, as these conversations become easier, you can get into the stronger stuff. Before you know it, you’ll be on a lead being walked around the flat like a dog (if that’s what you’re into).

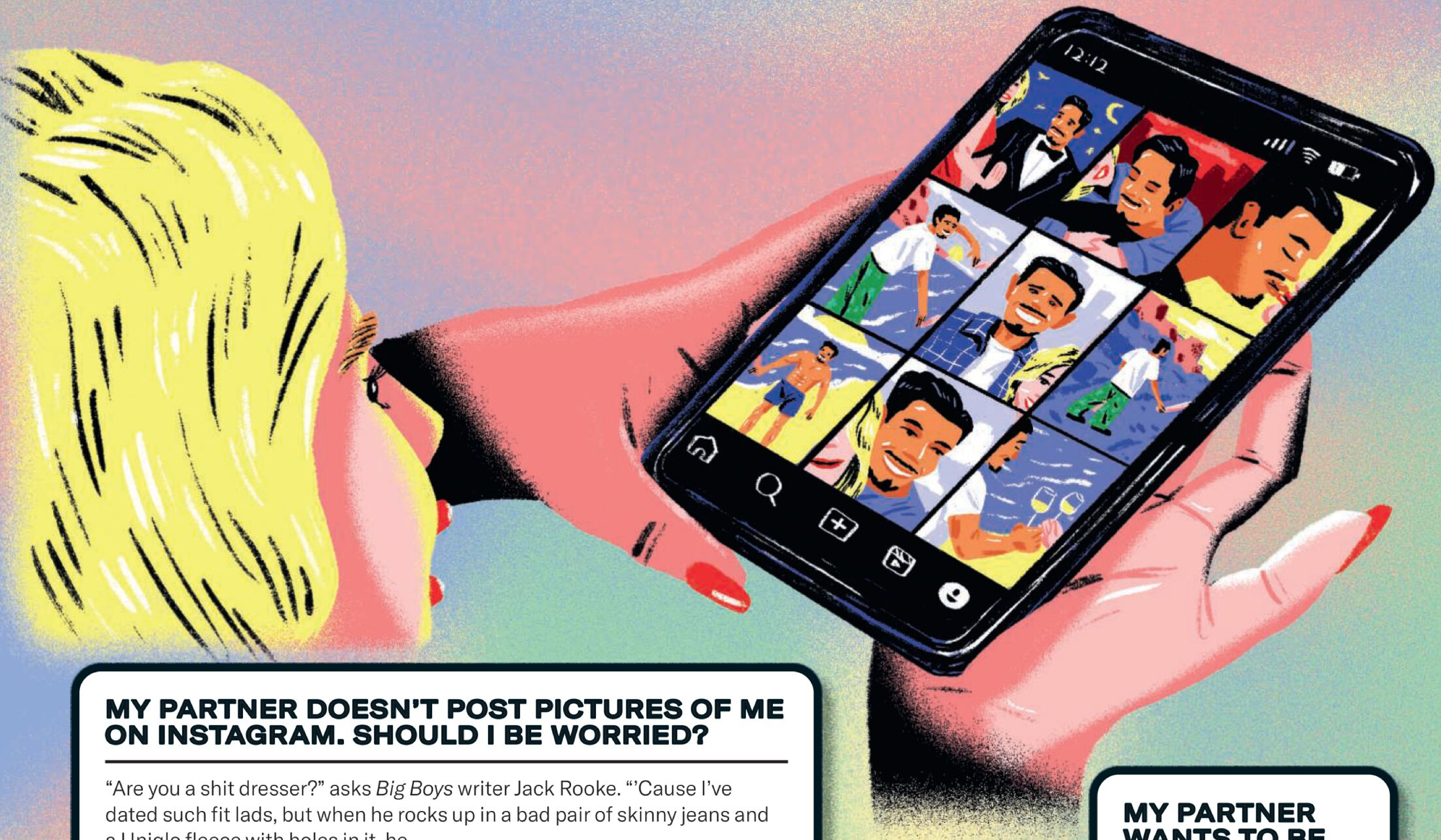
MY NEW PARTNER HAS AN ONLYFANS ACCOUNT AND WANTS ME TO BE ON IT. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

"Let's talk business," says model and writer Sydney Lima. "How much of them is in it? How much of you would be in it? Or how much of them would be in you for that matter? You need to work on a fair income split." Speaking from experience ("a failed attempt at creating a foot-only OnlyFans,") says Lima, such a venture might not be as straightforward an endeavour as you'd expect. "I would suggest a strong divvying-up of roles and hours before considering this joint venture."



WE JUST BROKE UP. CAN WE PEACEFULLY COEXIST FOR THE REST OF OUR SHARED RENTAL CONTRACT?

“Give each other space,” says Chiara King, host of the *King of Hearts* podcast. “Coordinate when you will both be in the house, because the more you are on the same premises together, the more likely an argument will occur. Worse would be sleeping together and starting a toxic cycle.”



MY PARTNER DOESN'T POST PICTURES OF ME ON INSTAGRAM. SHOULD I BE WORRIED?

"Are you a shit dresser?" asks *Big Boys* writer Jack Rooke. "'Cause I've dated such fit lads, but when he rocks up in a bad pair of skinny jeans and a Uniqlo fleece with holes in it, he def ain't going on the grid. I'm 'close friends'-ing that shit with text over the holes." If, however, you are a stylish person, then maybe your partner just wants their private life to stay private. "It doesn't mean they don't love you – they just might need all the IG dopamine hits to be about them."

I WANT TO TRY PEGGING, OR BEING PEGGED, BUT I'M NERVOUS. WHERE SHOULD I START?

"Start by making sure you've explored the world of anal play," says sex educator Dami "Oloni" Olonisakin. "This could be with a butt plug, anal beads and lots of lubricant. (Lube is always important.) Next, have a conversation with your partner about wanting to take it to the next level. Be clear about your boundaries and expectations. Then, research sex toys used for pegging – check out the different types of strap-ons."

MY PARTNER WANTS TO BE A "TRADDY" AND EXPECTS ME TO PAY FOR EVERYTHING – HOW DO I TELL THEM TO GET A JOB?

"You tell them with care for their feelings, and honesty with yours!" says dating coach Blaine Anderson. "It's 100 per cent OK to expect whoever you're dating to contribute to shared expenses – including dates – when you're in a committed relationship. But if you don't ask, some people may assume you don't expect help." Moya Lothian-McLean, Sarkar's podcast co-host, has a slightly more bracing take: "Just tell them you're not paying for everything. Either they will get a job or you will break up. Which way, Western man?"

I'M DESPERATE TO HALVE MY RENT BILL. HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN MY PARTNER AND I ARE READY TO MOVE IN TOGETHER?

"To be honest, there's no way to know for certain when you're ready to move in together," says Ash Sarkar. "Or take any other big step, like marriage, babies, or watching *The Wire*. Sometimes you just have to do shit, and see if it goes horribly wrong. Me and my partner moved in together in 2020, when the first Covid lockdown was looming and it was either that or not see each other for ages. Necessity is the mother of invention, and near-total social starvation meant that we had to be really intentional about being good to each other. I sometimes wonder whether the experience of having first cohabited in non-ideal circumstances has made us stronger in the long run." External forces, whether global pandemics or parasitic landlords, will inevitably shape your relationship. "Moving in together because you want to halve the rent isn't the worst reason in the world."

SHOULD I BE LOOKSMAXXING?

"No, babe," say Bowen and Marchetto. "Looksmaxxing might make you shinier on the outside, but if the inside is still crying out to be validated, you're just a pretty package and a 'handle with care' sticker. The way you feel about yourself comes across like cheap perfume in a lift; if you're radiating insecurity, people will smell it miles away." Work on loving yourself first. When you do, you'll naturally attract people who deserve you.

HELP! I THINK I'VE STARTED DATING AN INCEL (OR FEMCEL). WHAT SHOULD I DO?

"Cut off their internet connection," says Lima. "Incels thrive on manosphere clickbait." Without access to their favourite toxic motormouths, you'll have a better chance of coaxing them towards a more wholesome worldview. "If cutting off their wifi feels a little extreme, I would suggest changing their algorithm by speaking very loudly about other things while their phone is within a 10-metre radius. Alternatively: don't date an incel."

SEX JUST DOESN'T SEEM TO BE WORKING FOR ME RIGHT NOW. SHOULD I GIVE CELIBACY A GO?

"It really depends on what you want and what your body feels," says Oloni. "It's not about whether the sex is 'right', but whether it's fulfilling for you. Sit down and take some time to ask yourself what turns you on, what feels good, and if your sexual experiences align with that. Sometimes, a break helps you reset and reconnect with your desires." (In other words: nothing gets you hornier than a bit of a dry spell.)

I'M A YOUNG DIVORCÉE, ABOUT TO GET MARRIED FOR THE SECOND TIME. HOW DO I MAKE IT FEEL JUST AS SPECIAL?

"Elizabeth Taylor had eight weddings," says Lima. "EIGHT." Take her example to heart; learn from the mistakes of your first to tighten up the next one. "Where could you have drunk less wine, perhaps? Where could there have been a better cheeseboard? Who really sucked the energy out of the room and could be uninvited this time? You have a huge advantage now. Use it."

HOW DO I DATE ACROSS A BIG SALARY GAP?

"With a watertight prenuptial agreement," says Sarkar. More seriously, it depends on what stage of the relationship you're at, and which side of the salary gap you're on. "If you're dating and splitting stuff 50/50, what matters is whether you can find a shared landing zone for fun expenses. Does every dinner out have to come accompanied by a Michelin star? Are you all right with a weekend in Margate rather than 10 nights in the Maldives?" If you're living together and in a committed relationship, an equal split is less realistic. "It's a matter of how much you trust your partner not to take the piss, or to leverage their wealth over you to maintain the upper hand. One thing's for sure, though – love across a salary gap won't last if you think how much you earn is always a reflection of how hard you work."

MY PARTNER SAYS I'M A NARCISSIST. HOW DO I KNOW IF THEY'RE RIGHT?

You're not a narcissist ("a poorly defined term at the best of times"), because if you were, you wouldn't be worried about it, says Shon Faye, author of *Love in Exile*. "Now, not being a narcissist doesn't mean you might not be selfish, inconsiderate or unkind, at least some of the time." Your partner might just be expressing their resentment about this in psychological therapy-speak. But before you reflexively defend yourself, says relationship therapist Jeff Guenther (aka TherapyJeff), it's worth considering the point. "Do you dominate every conversation like you're hosting a talk show? When your partner's upset, do you make it all about you and your tragic bad hair day? If yes – congratulations, there might be a tiny ego monster lurking within."

HOW DO I GET MY FRIENDS TO SET ME UP WITH SOMEONE WITHOUT SOUNDING DESPERATE?

"Set-ups via friends are a phenomenal way to meet qualified singles, and directly asking for introductions makes you savvy, not desperate," says Anderson. "You only look desperate if you're asking the same handful of friends for introductions over and over and over again." Don't expect them to bail you out of singledom without any effort on your part. Assuming you're not doing this, just be upfront about it when you see your friends.

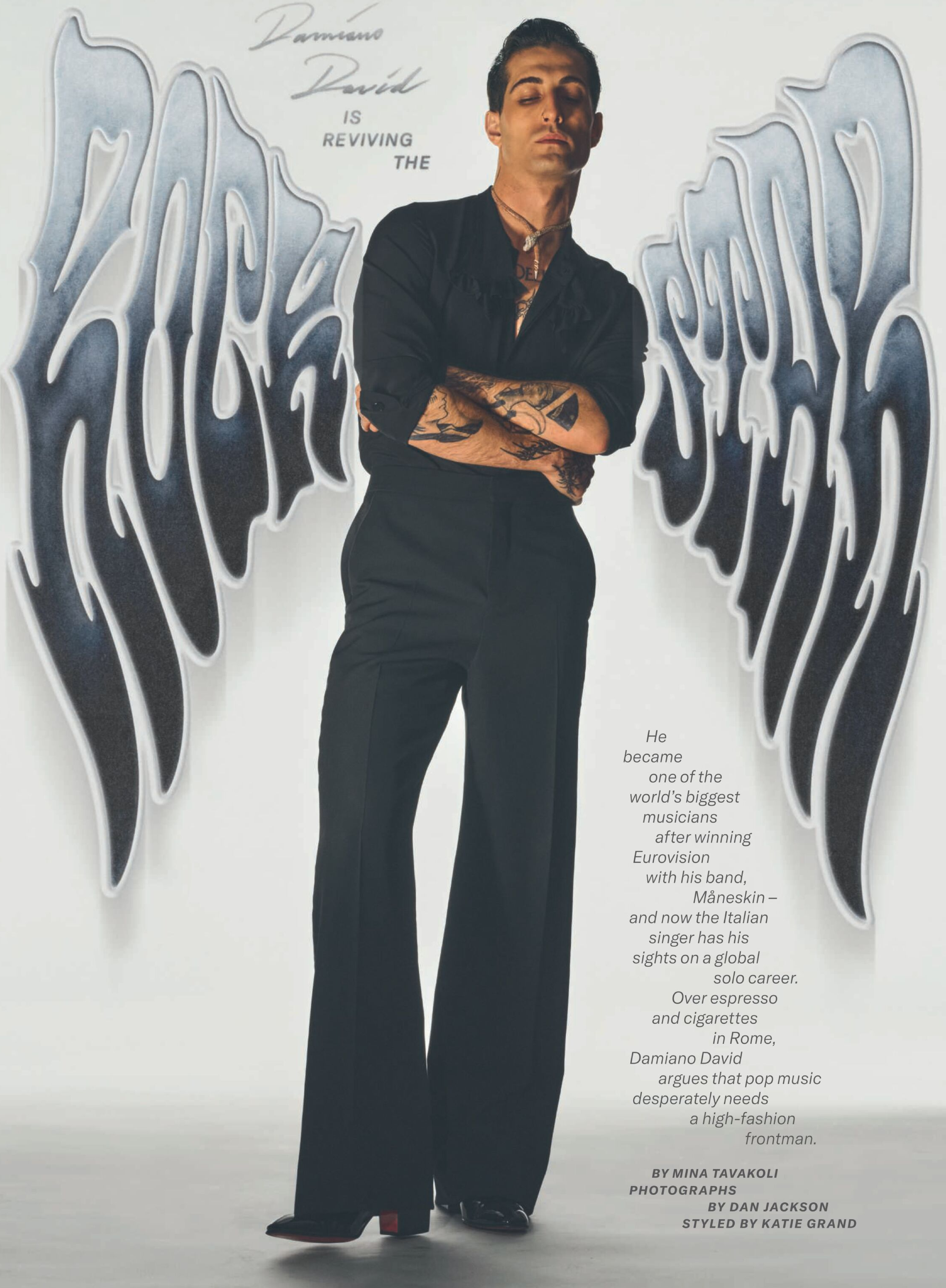
HOW DO I STOP COMPARING SEX WITH MY PARTNER TO PORN?

"Oh, so your real-world hook-ups don't look like a scene from *Pizza Delivery Gone Wild*?" says Guenther. "Newsflash: porn is staged to be ridiculous on purpose. If you're busy rating your partner's every move against a bunch of people who have a team of lighting experts making their abs look next-level, you're missing the point of actual intimacy. Try tuning in to what's happening in bed – actual eye contact, actual feelings – rather than replaying some highlight reel of choreographed spanks and exaggerated moans. Communicate with your partner: maybe they'd love to spice things up, minus the bad acting and questionable plotlines."

WE HAVE VERY DIFFERENT POLITICS. CAN WE STILL DATE?

"Do you want to?" asks Lothian-McLean. "Seriously: do you want to?" You need to work out exactly how big the divide is and, most importantly, whether your values align. "A connection that sees two people disagree over monetary policy, but concur on how they want to raise a family, has a shot at success. If you're at odds on, say, the rights of minorities, hang it up now."

Damiano David IS REVIVING THE ROCK STAR



He became one of the world's biggest musicians after winning Eurovision with his band, Måneskin – and now the Italian singer has his sights on a global solo career. Over espresso and cigarettes in Rome, Damiano David argues that pop music desperately needs a high-fashion frontman.

BY MINA TAVAKOLI
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN JACKSON
STYLED BY KATIE GRAND

←←
OPENING PAGES, LEFT
shirt and trousers
Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello

boots
Christian Louboutin

nose ring (throughout), his own

necklace (throughout),
Bvlgari

OPENING PAGES, RIGHT
shirt
Valentino

watch and earrings (throughout),
Bvlgari

→
OPPOSITE PAGE
dressing gown
Rick Owens

shorts (throughout),
S.S. Daley

nipple ring (throughout), his own

DAMIANO DAVID, THE frontman of Måneskin, fiddles with the ashtray. Out in the Piazza del Popolo, *un minuto a piedi* from the hotel courtyard where we sit, a cast of whimsical men has apparently been let loose on the women of Rome. A lollipop salesman is busily seducing a crush of tourists. The maître d' of a fancy restaurant is entertaining his waitresses by shooing a pigeon with his hat. Not one, but two jesters – first juggling, then dropping, navel oranges – are blowing kisses at the flock of pearly signoras who stopped to lob their fruit back. "Yes," says David, almost listlessly, "everybody is like a comedian."

In his own way, David is a performance artist of this particularly Roman strain of rakish male swag. He is the lead singer of a glamorous and extraordinarily horny interpretation of a rock band, whose rise to international megastardom reads like an absurd epic. It began with David, a street musician on the tourist-congested thoroughfare of the Via del Corso, and reached one of multiple climaxes when David – shirtless in leather trousers, eyeliner and Louboutin heels – triumphed at Eurovision in 2021. David's cock-rocking Måneskin performance made him a muse of former Gucci designer Alessandro Michele and a beloved target of paparazzi, and, in one instance, it earned him a rebuke by the sitting French president (more shortly).

"Romans have this sense of humour," he says, lighting a cigarette. But the sword, he warns, is double-edged. "It's definitely a city of judgers," he says.

David's talent has been repeatedly positively adjudicated – Måneskin was voted into fame on the road to Eurovision glory – but the 26-year-old has also endured outsized critical heat. Måneskin are commercially powerful practitioners of rock, a genre that is endangered in the US and almost nonexistent in Italy, and whose remaining advocates seem hell-bent on skewering David on ancient merits such as "authenticity".

Still, since the group's first album in 2021, Måneskin had hits that banked 11 weeks at the top of the US rock charts. The group got a Grammy nomination for best new artist, made headlines at the MTV Music Awards (largely thanks to David's thong and chaps), and won favourite rock song at 2022's American Music Awards for "Beggin", a monstrously hooky cover of a track originally sung by Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons in 1967. On the wings of TikTok's For You page, "Beggin" rocketed into the Billboard Top 40 and catapulted to number one on its Rock & Alternative Airplay chart. The US press was still declaiming Måneskin's rock credentials when David made it known that the band was taking a break in order for members to pursue personal music projects.

In Italy, David's calibre of fame prevents him from going out in public easily. To discuss his first solo album, *Funny Little Fears*, due to arrive this spring, he is squirrelled away in an especially jungly nook of the terrace. His usual deportment – the sweaty, woebegone dark angel driven out of hell to seduce the men and women of earth – is nowhere to be found. David is perfumed, showered and clothed, posh in dandyish loafers and trousers the colour of a hazelnut.

A gentlemanly swerve into pop music is on David's horizon. Last autumn, during an appearance on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, he sang a new, suspiciously sentimental song, wearing not only a shirt but a double-breasted jacket and tie. The change, I venture, makes the dog-collar-and-mesh-clad David of Måneskin yore feel like a character in the tradition of David Bowie's Ziggy Stardust.

David pauses for the server, greeting her with a "*Buongiorno*" so velvety that it makes her laugh. He politely shields her from the cherry of his Camel as she delivers sugared *cornetti*, espressi and embroidered napkins.

"I regret not presenting myself with a stage name," David tells me through his smoke. "I regret not doing it in the past."

Like Harry Styles and Justin Timberlake before him, David has arrived at a professional turnpike where certain questions arise. In David's case: do rock-band antics translate into pop-star presence? Can Damiano *da solo* break out in the US and pass muster at home? And will he ever don leather chaps again?

"I would have been terrified if I was like, OK, I did the band and now I want to be more and more famous and make more money," he says. Without members of Måneskin by his side, the (let's call it) vulnerability of a solo career seems to loom over David, though not unpleasantly.

"I don't have breaking the streaming record as my goal… the scary part was more like, Am I going to be able to make music that is good enough for my own satisfaction?" he says. The tooth gems bonded to his canines twinkle in the sun. "Or will I call my own bluff?"

THE AVERAGE AMERICAN will be forgiven for any ignorance towards the Eurovision Song Contest. The simplest way to make sense of it is to first think of it like a standard song-based talent show, but to ratchet up its importance to a level on a par with the Olympics. Entrants are treated less like individual acts and more like ambassadors for their home countries.

In 2021, Måneskin was the true wild card, twisted jokers in a slate of campy, sugary balladeers. Among, say, Germany's entry (a flashy musician named Jendrik, who sang an anti-hate ballad with his bejewelled ukulele) and Norway (a sensitive songwriter named Tix, who sang a pro-love ballad in feathered angel wings), Italy's Måneskin felt like a troupe of marauders on heat. Pelvic-thrusting under custom Etro leatherwear, David and his bandmates (drummer Ethan Torchio, guitarist Thomas Raggi, bassist Victoria De Angelis) were a quartet of Plutonian punklings, following the god of sex under the sign of rock. Power chords paced the lyrics that were already tattooed above David's pecs. The original songs they delivered to a television audience of 183 million were a sonic smoothie of Motley Crüe, Placebo and Skid Row. Though their home country certainly *had* the rare rock star in its past, Italy treated Måneskin (the word is Danish for "moonlight," pronounced *moan*-uh-skin*)* like a meteoric strike from a foreign planet where Poison and Judas Priest were kings.

What made rock in Italian feel so alien? Partly, David explains, it's because of the language – a staggeringly bouncy one that doesn't square with angular guitar lines as easily as, say, English – which makes songwriting a relative minefield. In Italian, he says, "there are a lot of consonants, and hard sounds, so the lyrics are harder to fit."

IL BALLO DELLA VITA

DELI

←

OPPOSITE PAGE
shirt
Hermès

THIS PAGE
coat and waistcoat
Maison Margiela

trousers
Dsquared2

boots
Giuseppe Zanotti

↓
vest
Maison Margiela

→
trousers
Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello
gloves
Maison Margiela
bracelet (throughout),
Bvlgari

"Culturally, we give a lot of meaning to lyrics," he says, sucking thoughtfully on his cigarette. "A Guns N' Roses type of thing, or a Metallica type of thing" – where lyrics are as much about noise as meaning – "it's very hard to have it here." As for the stage presence, David says, the music simply demands drama. "It's four people on stage, a wall of sound that's very strong, and I feel like your physicality has to match the music," he says, shrugging.

Måneskin started out as buskers in the streets near the coconut-fronded courtyard where we're talking. Legions of charming YouTube videos feature the foursome, pre-fame, manfully tackling Stevie Wonder covers and their own proto-Måneskin rock. ("Kind of like ragamuffins," David notes.) At a venue fabulously named Spaghetti Unplugged, scouts sought the band out and delivered them, first, to Italian *X Factor*. That *X Factor* won them an EP with Sony Music that went triple platinum, which then took them to Sanremo, the music festival that determines who represents Italy at Eurovision. "It worked every time because we never approached them like a competition," says David.

This attitude doesn't annul the fact that these *were,* in fact, an incredibly fast-moving series of life-altering and fame-making contests. David's disposition helped: the kinkified frontman seemed preternaturally talented at making cinema out of every minute of the band's Eurovision airtime. He was rarely not shirtless. The crotch of his trousers tore explosively. In one dramatic split second at the end of the show, one of Eurovision's roving cameras captured David leaning his face over a table in the greenroom. Allegations swirled that he was snorting cocaine. A French broadcaster told the BBC that he received an urgent text message from French president Emmanuel Macron, who insisted Måneskin should be disqualified for David's apparently rock-star behaviour.

They were "infantile and underhanded" claims, David told *The New York Times*; "offensive and baffling", as he put it to *Billboard*. Today, he waves his wrists in bored dismissal. A voluntary drugs test showed David was in the clear, and in interviews afterwards he denounced this mixing of sign and signifier. "The stereotypes of 'sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll' are stupid and old-fashioned," he told *Numéro* magazine. "Rock, for us, is music above all. Not a lifestyle." In his Eurovision acceptance speech, he bellowed his broadside to the audience, throttling the mic like a log of salami. "We just want to say – to the whole Europe, to the whole world – rock'n'roll never dies!"

WHETHER ALIVE OR long dead, "rock'n'roll" remains, at its most basic, more attitude than genre. In the past, certain ideas were at play: anti-commercialism, antagonism towards mass culture, flouting establishment norms. These values ascended to something like Valhalla in the early '90s, as the death rattle of grunge blew out the flame of arena-filling rock, and hip-hop took regency as music's disruptive genre. Sure, alternative and nu metal experienced their own halcyons, and, yes, the noughties experienced a small boom of critical darlings, some of which crossed over into pop fame (like Franz Ferdinand or the Strokes). But rock at large today lives far from culture's centre, and more so since the economics of streaming hollowed out music's middle class.

Måneskin brings to rock Gen Z's comfort with the content-making obligations of contemporary fame, and the band takes special pleasure in sartorial spectacle. David made Met Gala appearances and sat front row at Fashion Week. With Diesel creative director Glenn Martens, he designed a capsule collection that includes a trompe l'oeil top that gives its wearer David's chest, back and bicep tattoos. On the occasion of a third album release, Måneskin were married – sort of – in a four-way wedding ceremony brought to you by Spotify and officiated by Alessandro Michele, who has also designed costumes for the band. The quartet delivered their "I dos" before Michele, who bade them united "in the name of Apollo, Elvis and Jimmy Page." "Damiano is a great performer, a stage animal," Michele told me. "I find his wild approach to music fascinating."

David did not, however, solve the apparently broad desire to fill an Elvis- or Led Zeppelin–sized hole in our culture. In a telling symptom of the confusion between what rock was and what rock now is, cloudbursts of scorn, furnished especially by the rockist American delegations, swarmed the band. "Absolutely terrible at every conceivable level," read *Pitchfork*'s operatic deliverance for *Rush!*, Måneskin's 2023 album. "Their success was fuelled by European reality show competitions, algorithms, and cumulative advantage… a band who are not just dressed in Gucci, they are dressed by Gucci." *The New York Times* asked the leading question: "Is Måneskin the Last Rock Band?", whereas *The Atlantic*, almost as though in follow-up, titled its invective "*This* Is the Band That's Supposedly Saving Rock and Roll?"

Rush! is, to be clear, a triumph of cock-rock kitsch, half-produced by Swedish superproducer Max Martin, who glazes the album's piledriving poetry (mostly in English, but with a few tracks in Italian) with the slickest of

DAD
BALLO DELLA V

dressing gown
Richard Anderson

shorts and shoes
Valentino

nose ring and socks,
his own

hair by lachlan mackie. skin by gianluca ferraro at etoile management. tailoring by alison o'brien. produced by macro.

pop sheens. Måneskin's Whitesnake *all'italiana* sensibility was hard for the journalist set to swallow. The band's clearest take on rock's relationship to the zeitgeist, disgorged on the track "Kool Kids", likely made the pill all the more bitter: "Cool kids, they do not like rock," David barks in a kooky Cockney accent. "They only listen to trap and pop."

Now, looking back warmly on his music as if it were written by a treasured poet, David adds an interesting annotation to these lyrics. "Pop took on the wrong meaning in the last few years," he theorises. "Pop means popular. If something is easily digestible, it doesn't matter if it's rock, techno, or whatever – it's pop. We were pop. Guns N' Roses, to a degree, were the pop of their time."

This is a deceptively subtle point, one that took the louder representatives of Gen X years to accept. Rock is a broader idea than when it burst onto the scene. It's no longer the rebellion it was 70, 50 or 30 years ago. Yes, Måneskin summons a million rock associations – the repeated licking of Stratocasters, lyrics like "Oh, ma-mamma mia, spit your love on me," a general air of cocksureness. But its embrace of kingpin pop producers and fashion capital, and its inherent facility for short-form video, make Måneskin's rock operate strictly under the new rules of pop. There has long been, David suggests with a level of insouciance that should give a rock snob a hernia, a porous relationship not just between rock and pop, but between pop and all genres.

"If you sign to a label and put your music on [streaming] platforms," he says, draining his espresso, "you're pop. You're doing pop for the people."

THE DAVID WHO is having a third cigarette before me is annoyingly difficult not to compare to the marble *David* in Florence, some 270km away. He is serene and a little brooding, in stark contrast to Måneskin's oversexed excess.

In a late 2024 interview, David said that it was "healthiest" for the members of Måneskin to pursue their own separate interests. That way, he said, the next Måneskin album will be "music we wanted to do and that we had fun doing." Fans nonetheless mourned: the sheer quantity of posts about the group's pause on the thousands-deep subreddit r/Måneskin has moderators threatening to remove any thread by Månnequins despairing the band's future. (A typical comment begins: "AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!")

But the tradition of bands splintering is a natural, even canonical experience for most people who play music together. (For more, see the fates of the Beatles, the Stooges and the Replacements.) Among the first decisions for a frontman of major-label stature like David to make is whether to lean in to or away from his past persona. The early evidence shows David reclined nearly horizontal.

Consider the video for one of his new singles, the power ballad "Born With a Broken Heart". It has him rolling up to a Hollywood studio lot in a Clark Gable–style '50s Jaguar. Wearing a loose cornflower blue suit and a prim pompadour, he stares into the middle distance as the pink plumage of his backing dancers whaps softly against his face. He looks like Omar Sharif with a chest piece, delivering a chorus ("Baby you can't fix me / I was born with a broken heart") as graftable onto Harry Styles as it would be the Killers. Whereas the Måneskin Damiano occasionally made out on stage with a bandmate, pop David seems to err debonair.

Pop is a particularly narrative genre, requiring a few wins, a few setbacks, and a lot of matters of the heart. This incoming album is, in brief, the story of a lovesick Italian gentleman. It's a savvy idea, retro and masculine in a non-threatening, continental way. "What I really want to do is to bring that Italian class and elegance," he says. "Everything feels expensive."

Album credits include a murderers' row of blue-chip songwriters and producers: Jason Evigan (co-writer for Justin Bieber and Maroon 5) and Sarah Hudson (Katy Perry, Dua Lipa). "It's two different movies," Evigan says of the transition from Måneskin to Damiano *da solo*. Evigan and Hudson were both recruited to work on some of the music on *Rush!*; the two are uniquely intimate with both Måneskin's rock and David's future. "He's so fluid," says Hudson. "We wanted heartfelt love songs, vulnerability from a man," she says, adding, "and I mean, he's so beautiful."

What the two seem to locate in their praise about David is his knack for melodrama – a quality that just so happens to be right in the centre of the Venn diagram between rock and pop. Great melodramatic art is overwhelming; it induces a delicious feeling of surrender to its extremes. It's why, as Evigan says, "If Måneskin was *The Crow*," David's new work "is like *The Notebook* meets *La Dolce Vita*."

Back in the hotel courtyard, David shifts in his seat. "I want to show people that I don't take myself seriously."

So, I ask. *Pop David's a little cartoonish?*

"Mm-hmm," he says. "Yeah." But he wants to get the ratio just right. "When I'm on stage, of course it's me because it's me, but it's a version of me and it's a percentage," he says. "It's what I decide to bring that night to people."

He thinks for a moment. "When I'm performing rock," he says slowly, "I'm very focused on getting something from the audience. With pop, I think it's more for myself."

MINA TAVAKOLI *is a writer based in Virginia, US.*

→
shirt
Saint Laurent by
Anthony Vaccarello

Suited and Booted

ANDRÉA KỌSTA

Established in 2017, Andréa Kọsta set out to create an authentic menswear experience that modernises traditional tailoring, informed by the owners' Mediterranean heritage. The brand is renowned for exceptional craftsmanship, using only the finest cloth from British and Italian mills and delivering a highly personalised made-to-measure service. It also offers a curated range of seasonal ready-to-wear collections, reflecting its dedication to quality, blending timeless style with contemporary elegance. Visit andreakosta.co.uk and follow on IG @andreakostaofficial

ELIO EVAN

Redefining men's luxury, Elio Evan melds time-honoured Italian artistry with contemporary savoir-faire. Plush fabrics and meticulously tailored cuts create a distinctive identity that commands attention on any occasion. Experience the synergy of tradition and innovation. Visit elioevan.com and @elio.evan on IG.

BOBBY MACC BESPOKE

Founded in 2008, BOBBY MACC is a second generation tailor and fashion designer. His inspiration stems from his childhood and mother, who was also a professional dressmaker. The luxury brand specialise in bespoke tailoring and made to order footwear for both men and women alike - notably their 24k gold bottom shoes. Whether you are after traditional or modern bespoke, Bobby Macc have you covered for every occasion. Visit bobbymacc.com and @bobbymaccbespokecouture on IG.

SUITBAE

BLACKPOOL is back, and SUITBAE is making waves in the UK suit scene. This independent brand delivers premium fabrics, stitch quality built to last, and their iconic tangerine paisley lining (pictured). Visit their warehouse store 7 days a week or shop online at suitabae.com Don't miss out—check them out now! IG: @suitbaeuk

BESPOKUTURE

For the most discerning gentlemen, Bespokuture creates the epitome of sartorial excellence. Crafting bespoke masterpieces for those who demand nothing less than perfection – from meticulously hand-stitched full canvas jackets to exquisitely handcrafted Oxfords. Experience artisanal luxury at bespokuture.com or follow on IG @bespokuture

HIDALGO BROTHERS

Hidalgo Brothers stand as purveyors of unparalleled tailoring mastery. For those in the know, their creations aren't just suits but sartorial symphonies, woven with precision and a keen eye for detail. Every piece tells a story, capturing the essence of its wearer with unmatched elegance and style. Visit hidalgobrothers.com and follow @hidalgobrothers on IG.

THANE ZRONGO

It's said that it takes one-tenth of a second to make a first impression, why squander that? Nothing speaks louder than a man's attire. Designed in the pursuit of sartorial excellence, Thane Zrongo produces exceptional hand-crafted garments. Each detail is painstakingly selected, every stitch put in place with caring hands. Deliberately spending their time, so you don't have to squander yours. Visit thanezrongo.com and @thanezrongo on IG.

Spring Forward

OLLECH & WAJS

The C-1000 FAGN, a watch originally developed for the Air Force of the National Gendarmerie, France's elite military and law enforcement helicopter unit, is now available to the public. Depth tested to 1000m and COSC certified. Visit ow-watch.ch or @ollechandwajs

NEWMARK WATCH COMPANY

Crafted for the sky, ready for anything. The Newmark 6BB Chronograph pays tribute to the RAF classic, now part of a Heritage Collection including a 52 Field Watch and dive-ready 71 Sports and Waterking models. Performance and heritage, refined. Celebrate 150 Years of British Watchmaking with Newmark. Explore more at newmarkwatchcompany.com or follow on IG/Facebook @newmarkwatchcompany

CAMP

Designed in LA, Camp offer a range of classic watches with unexpected details, notably their lustrous, hand-polished dials. Swiss made with custom hand-wound movements, each dial features unique typefaces and colours, inspired by automotive, historical and cultural Southern Californian influences. Visit campwatches.com and follow @campwatchco on IG.

RZE

After five years of delivering tough, titanium tool watches built for the everyday adventurer, RZE enters the digital era with the debut of the UTD-8000. Resistant to water, dust, shock, vibration, and extreme temperatures, their first all-titanium digital watch is available this spring and guaranteed for a lifetime of adventures. Visit rzewatches.com and follow on IG: @rzewatches

MAKYDO WATCHES

Unveiling the Makydo 38 Diver Black Lite, a symphony of stealth and sophistication. Its rugged black IP-coated case, textured dial, and luminous markers exude confidence. Water-resistant to 150 metres, it's as fearless underwater as it is on land. For those who dare, this timepiece defines adventure. Visit makydo.com and @makydowatches on IG.

DJORDJE LONDON

Make an unforgettable statement with the Classic Oxford by Djordje London, a new minimalist luxury brand founded by Jayvin Maneklal in Australia, inspired by the vibrant streets of London; this slim timepiece is designed to effortlessly pair with any style, making it the perfect accessory for all occasions. All while contributing 2% of every purchase towards children in need. Visit djordjelondon.com and follow @djordjelondon_ on IG.

LOCKE AND KING

LOCKE & KING
CANADA
AUTOMATIC

Born from a working-class Canadian city, Locke & King crafts ruggedly-elegant, heirloom-worthy automatic watches for everyday heroes. Designed with the highest quality and precision, their timepieces honour the grit and style of those who do great things every day. Built to last, they're made for today, tomorrow, and everyday after. Visit LockeandKing.ca and @LockeandKing on IG.

MD WATCHES STUDIO

MD Watches Studio is based in Ireland and was founded in 2017. Their vision is to bring forth both innovation and style, through creating bold, sophisticated timepieces at obtainable prices. Their approach is to encapsulate contemporary horological design, with perfectly balanced aesthetics. Visit martindesignwatches.com and @martindwatches on IG.

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GQ's Lookbook

KINGDOM OF WOW

Feel the spring in your step with these breathable, lightweight slippers. Handcrafted by Kingdom of Wow from natural wool and bamboo yarn with supple leather soles. These unisex slippers are light and airy, perfect for protecting your feet during warmer months. Relax into premium style and comfort today. Visit kingdomofwow.com and follow on IG: @kingdom.of.wow

STILTS SHOES

Stilts Inc. celebrates bold artistry and individuality. The Zig Zag Collection: Step and Carry features matching sneakers and bags, blending vibrant patterns inspired by Black art with functional luxury. The Rockstar Collection, inspired by the rebellious energy of music icons, delivers edgy, statement-making designs. Style that empowers and inspires! Visit stiltsshoes.com and @stiltsshoes on IG.

CREATORSCLUBSTORE

Creatorsclubstore is a UK-based sustainable clothing brand blending minimalism with purpose. Driven by creativity, they craft timeless pieces using recycled and organic materials. Their mission is to inspire conscious living, champion individuality, and reshape fashion with sustainability at its core. creatorsclubstore.com and @creatorsclubstore on IG.

LENNERTSON

From across the channel, Belgian design brand Lennertson brings boot-level craftsmanship to sneakers with The Pilgrim. Handcrafted in Europe with full-grain leather inside and out, stitched soles, and a sleek, vintage-inspired design. Perfect for spring, yet a true year-round essential. Visit lennertson.com and use code GQBRIT for your special offer (expires 01.06.25).

9-JOUR.

9-jour. (ku-jo) combines Japan's artistry with sustainability: crafting stylish, comfortable denim dyed naturally with fresh flowers and plants for hues chemicals can't replicate. Explore their extensive palette to find 'your perfect colour' and experience the future of fashion—where exceptional quality meets eco-conscious elegance. Visit 9-jour.jp/en and @9_jour on IG.

LIL LIT

Blurring the lines between nostalgia and futurism, lil lit delivers small, high-quality drops that feel like a dream fashion mood board. Founder Jeane-Sari unites top fashion creatives like Matteo Sinet and Cayetano González with rising talents such as music producer Jameson Vybe and designer Philipp E., for a fresh take on fashion. Visit lil-lit.com and @lillit.clo on IG.

ELTHORNE BRIDGE

Elthorne Bridge Atelier redefines heritage with contemporary elegance, transforming classic British textiles into sophisticated, purposeful designs. Every piece is a fusion of history, craftsmanship, and modern sensibility—crafted to be lived in, not just worn. Timeless yet functional, their creations celebrate identity, confidence, and the enduring art of reinvention. Browse elthornebridge.com and @elthornebridge on IG.

FRADIMÉ

From stylish simplicity to intricate visuals, FRADIMÉ is the new generation of luxury streetwear that is fast becoming a favourite in wardrobes across the country. Born in Britain, inspired by street culture, and fuelled by a drive for perpetual quality, FRADIMÉ escapes the ordinary to deliver high-end urban fashion to its community. Browse fradime.co.uk and follow on IG @fradime.uk

SAVA AMSTERDAM

SAVA Amsterdam is a men's jewellery brand from the heart of the Dutch capital. They create stylish, minimalistic pieces that are both unique and timeless. Their jewellery is designed to upgrade any outfit, giving you an easy way to look your best and feel confident. Whether at the beach or a night out, their pieces are for every day. Follow on IG: @sava.amsterdam and visit sava-amsterdam.com

PLACE OF ËLMS

Place of Ëlms is a passion project by entrepreneur, activist, and designer Lennie Moreno, aiming to expand our collective consciousness and create a world rooted in nature's core values—strength, respect, truth, freedom, and integrity. After travelling the world to find skilled artisans and exclusive fabrics, Lennie partnered with family businesses in Italy and Turkey who share these values. With its commitment to integrity and limited-edition designs, Place of Ëlms stands as a prominent force in luxury fashion. Visit placeofelms.com and @placeofelms on IG.

PAXPARIS

There's an art to getting jewellery right—too much, and it's trying too hard; too little, and it's forgettable. PAXPARIS gets the balance just right. Understated but deliberate, the brand's collection of sharp, sculptural pieces feels like a natural extension of personal style. No fuss, no flash—just quiet confidence. Visit paxparis.com and follow @paxparis on IG.

GRAIL

Grail's debut silhouette, the 'Showman', is redefining luxury sneakers. Handcrafted in Portugal from supple Italian leather, delivering timeless design with refined ease. Crisp lines with distinct accents, a statement piece that grabs attention wherever you go. Visit grailbrand.com and @grail_brand on IG.

BOXEROO

The RooPouch Boxer - The latest innovation in boxer technology, providing full support and unmatched comfort throughout the day. Crafted with cutting edge anti-chafe panels and made from sustainably sourced Tencel fibres, these boxers offer a lightweight ultra-soft feel that will make you forget you're wearing them. Whether at the gym, in the office, or on the go, these boxers deliver the ultimate blend of style and functionality. Visit boxeroo.co.uk and follow @boxerooofficial on IG.

STAY WEALTHY

Introducing Stay Wealthy, the London-based unisex brand creating premium fashion and lifestyle pieces. From acid wash to velour, their range of hoodies, joggers and varsity jackets are available in matching sets, blending supreme quality with style and comfort. Shop online at staywealthyclothing.com and follow @therealstaywealthy on IG.

HEDON

Luxury eyewear maker BRETT and handcrafted helmet specialist HEDON have joined forces to create a groundbreaking line of sunglasses that blend cutting-edge functionality with refined aesthetics. Designed for those who demand more than just good looks, these sunglasses combine precision engineering, advanced protection, and timeless style. With unparalleled craftsmanship and high-performance features, they are built for both the ride and beyond. Experience the perfect balance of form and function — your next adventure awaits. Visit hedon.com and @hedonworkshop on IG.

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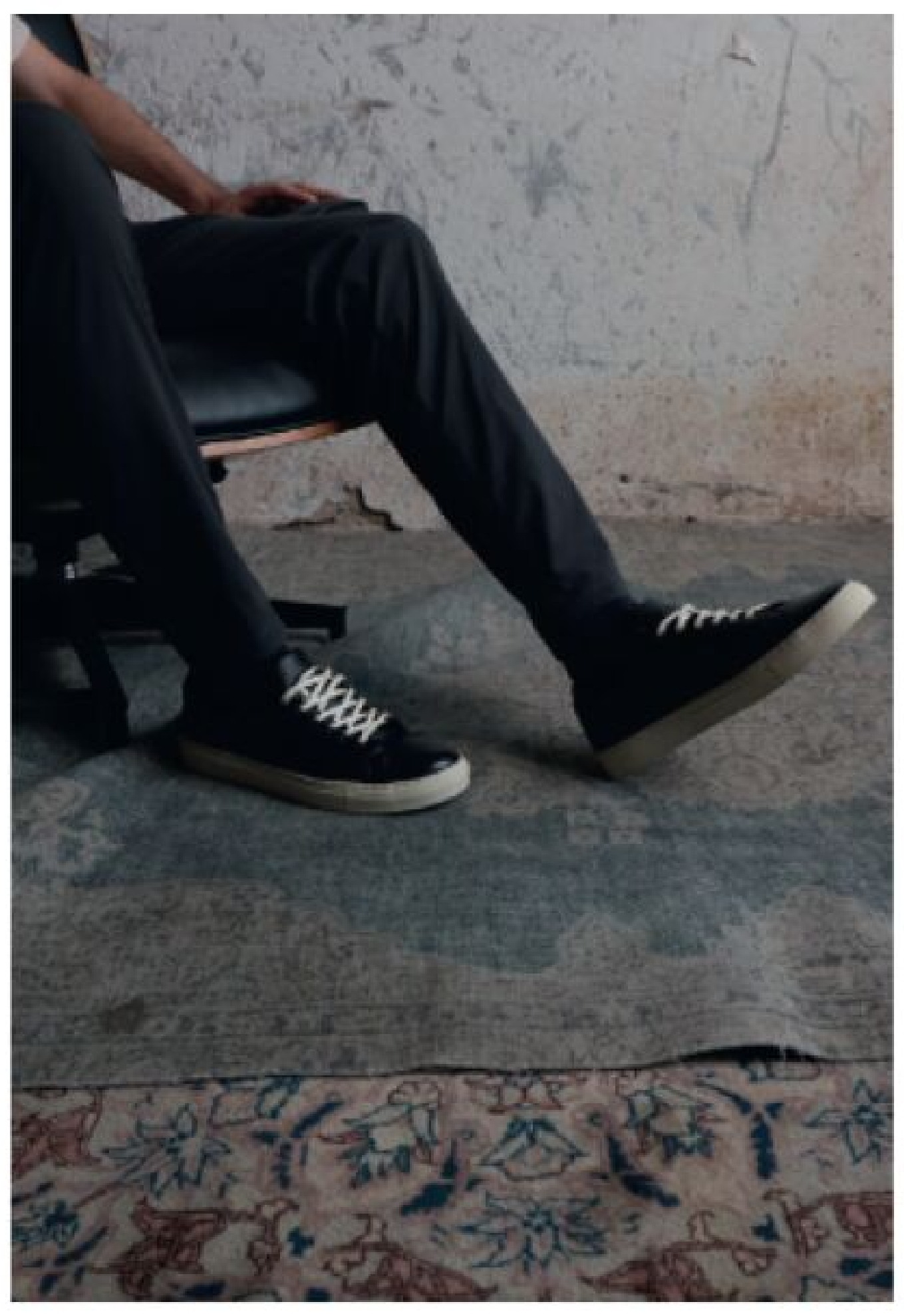
GQ's Lookbook

ACR(LA)

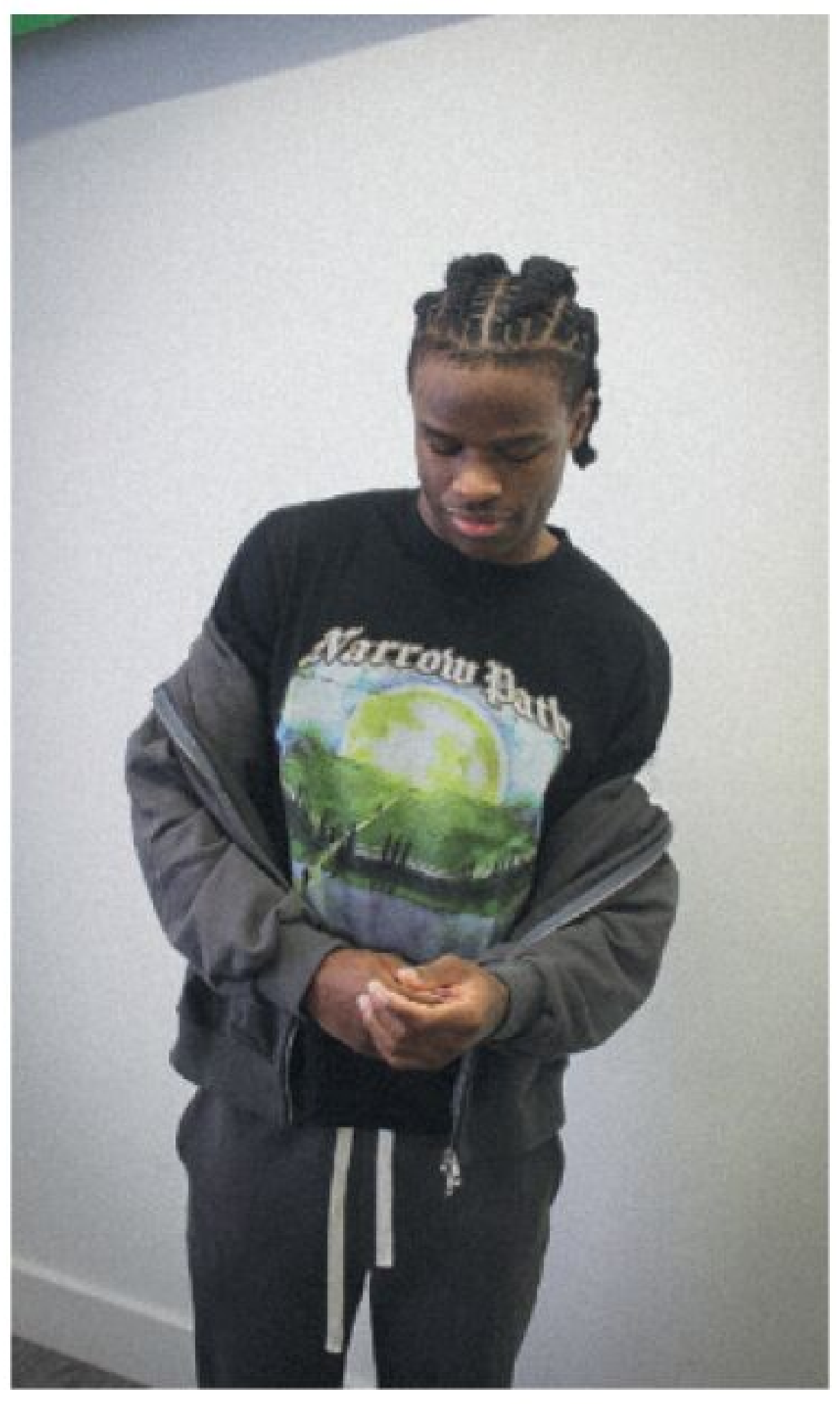


ACR(LA) is a timeless footwear brand focused on high-quality materials, powerful design, and minimalist craftsmanship. Guided by the philosophy 'less is more', they create functional and refined pieces. Inspired by art, design, and architecture, their designs reflect balance and proportion, made for men who appreciate aesthetics, quality, and style. Visit acr-la.com and @acrlastudio on IG.

SABBIA

Sabbia, influenced by global cultures, presents a stunning collection of kimonos crafted from vibrant fabrics, drawing inspiration from the beauty of everyday life. With sustainable and fair practice at its core, each piece, made from the finest linen and silk, embodies effortless elegance, where impeccable craftsmanship meets a refined yet relaxed aesthetic. Visit sabbia.online and @sabbiaofficial_ on IG.

DON'T RUSH GREATNESS



Don't Rush Greatness are all about not rushing the process. The upcoming London based streetwear brand strive to positively influence through their carefully created and detailed garments for both men and women. Browse their lookbook at dont-rush-greatness.com and follow @greatnessdontrush on IG.

COMPLICE

Founded by two brothers and their lifelong friend, Complice is an Athens-based fashion house. Each Complice garment is designed to be versatile and crafted to last, with an emphasis on tailoring and an eclectic use of materials. The 'orama' (Greek for 'vision') is evident in every stitch and seam from their pieces, giving consumers the chance to not only to see, but to feel the vision and be a part of the journey. Visit compliceteam.com and follow @compliceteam on IG.

CORRUPT DUNYA

corrupt dunyā

Corrupt Dunya isn't just clothing—it holds weight. Every piece packs the message of a world that's broken, but still standing tall. It's not just about looking good, it's about rocking something that has real meaning and makes a statement. When you wear Corrupt Dunya, you're carrying more than just threads, you're representing a mindset that's all about breaking through the noise and staying real. Visit corruptdunya.com and follow @corruptdunya on IG.

FRONT 11201

FRONT 11201, created by a founding member of FRONT GENERAL STORE in New York, has teamed up with Museum of Daily for a special Great Figures sweatshirt, featuring Frank Lloyd Wright's portrait on their original item. Opened in 2021 in Yoyogi Hachiman, FRONT 11201 offers vintage clothing, jewellery, and premium Japanese-made apparel. The brand also showcased its collection at 25SS Fashion Week Tokyo in September 2024. Visit front11201.com and @front11201 on IG.

CHARCOAL

The Charcoal Dossier is more than a sleek folio—it's a suave, bespoke suit for your laptop with fresh, practical functionality. A stylish alternative to your bag. Visit charcoal.inc and follow on IG @chrcl.ig

REWORKED 348

Established in 2020, Reworked 348 is a small collective of industry veterans with a passion for menswear but determined to do things differently - kinder and more responsibly. Avoiding the use of new and virgin materials wherever possible, they search out high-quality "new" dead stock / leftover materials to create timeless, utility and workwear-inspired clothing. Made in the UK in a more sustainable and thoughtful way. Visit reworked348.com and IG @reworked348

ACRA

Yorkshire's Finest. Joe Lobel, Chiedu Oraka and Ato Alexander for ACRA. Together we can all achieve more. ACRA is about celebrating each other's progress and pushing everyone to achieve more. ACRA is where the worlds of music and fashion collide with a specific focus on exposing underground talent. From the North of England to Accra. Together, No Limits. Visit houseofacra.com and follow @orakald on IG.

CAVETTA

Fully customisable and meticulously handcrafted in Australia by master jewellers. Every Cavetta ring showcases unmatched attention to detail, from the initial design to the final polish, using only the finest, sustainably sourced Australian gold and ethically obtained gemstones in every ring. Buy yours at cavetta.com and follow @cavetta on IG.

BLESS ATLANTA

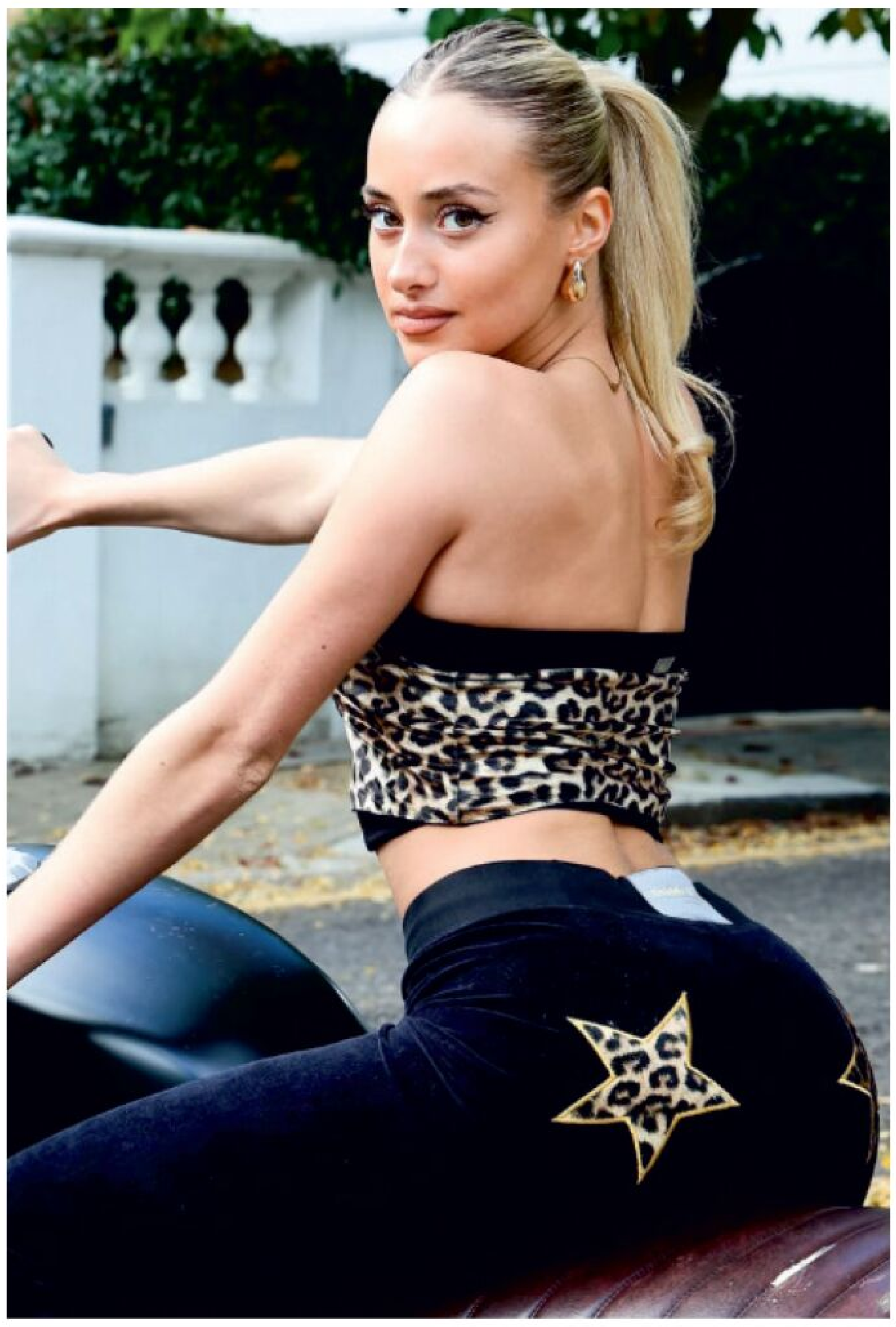
BLESS ATLANTA

Established in Atlanta, Bless Atlanta stands at the vanguard of contemporary luxury, masterfully blending refined aesthetics with cultural authenticity. Featuring impeccably crafted pieces that unite upscale sophistication with urban edge, this game-changing brand offers an array of premium essentials complemented by coveted limited releases. Each collection embodies the evolution of modern American luxury, where meticulous attention to detail meets bold, innovative design. Modelled by @elizabethfxng. Visit blessatlanta.com and follow on IG @blessatlanta

DECEM

DECEM by Paolo Grillo: the art of transforming visions and stories into sculptural jewellery inspired by the splendour of past eras. Bold and original creations designed for those who wish to stand out. Discover exclusivity at xdecem.com and find inspiration on IG @x_decem. DECEM: luxury with a shadowy allure that ignites the soul.

BABBLE & GOOSE



London based Babble and Goose is a luxury clothing brand for teens and young adults who have a strong sense of individuality, fun and style. Their collection of velour joggers come in a huge range of eye catching colours featuring beautifully trimmed pockets or individually embroidered stars. Bold, different and beautifully made. Visit babbleandgoose.co.uk IG @babbleandgoose

NOT A MAISON

NOT a MAiSON is the new Italian-based bandana brand, crafting iconic designs inspired by the spirit of the '90s. Each piece combines effortless style, comfort, and adaptability, offering something to suit every personality. Creating must-have accessories, NOT a MAiSON is the brand worth paying attention to. Visit notamaison.com and @not.a.maison on IG.

HIGHWAY FINERY

Stylish rings, sustainably made. Highway Finery offer chunky, stackable pieces that make the perfect jewellery addition to your collection. Browse their pieces on highwayfinery.com and on IG @highwayfinery

EYEKØNIK

Founded in Amsterdam, EYEKØNIK brings you high-quality eyewear that blends timeless classics with modern, unique designs. Perfectly crafted for style and comfort, their collection is available exclusively online. Discover frames that upgrade your look and make every moment iconic. Visit eyekonikeyewear.com and follow on IG: @eyekonik.eyewear

RUNYARO

Runyaro is a boundary-pushing luxury brand redefining statement fashion with innovation and nostalgia. Fusing high-end craftsmanship with bold, artistic designs - most notably its iconic cassette tape handbags, Runyaro bridges past and future, creating timeless pieces that speak to individuality, culture, and self-expression. This is fashion with a story, built to last. Visit runyaro.com and follow @runyaro on IG.

COPLINE

Copline continues to coalesce the bounds of modern streetwear and luxury after two successful collections. Their eye for capturing identity through pieces serves to highlight the brand as an upcoming afrocentric label. Look out for their fine denim collection in the next few months, incorporating oversized sets, versatile colourways, and multi-seasonal comfortability. Visit coplineapparel.com and follow on IG @coplineuk

AANARCHY

AAnarchy, a sustainable fashion house, focuses on timeless and durable designs that gain beauty with wear. Through their subsidiary, TAAilor Shop, they dedicate their technical expertise to prolonging the usability of all garments. AAnarchy unites fabric & community—through radio sessions, car-spotting, and events, this eclectic NY-based design house knows no bounds. Denim & Bag available on their website at aanarchy.xyz/shop and on IG @aa.narchy @taailor.shop

BLACKOUT13

BLACKOUT13 stands as a beacon of distinguished masculinity, a bastion of unwavering strength, resilience and sophistication. Their Militant Elegance range is the epitome of quality and aims to inspire their audience to embrace their individuality with no mercy and no remorse. Visit blackout13.com and follow @blackout13__ on IG.

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GQ's Lookbook

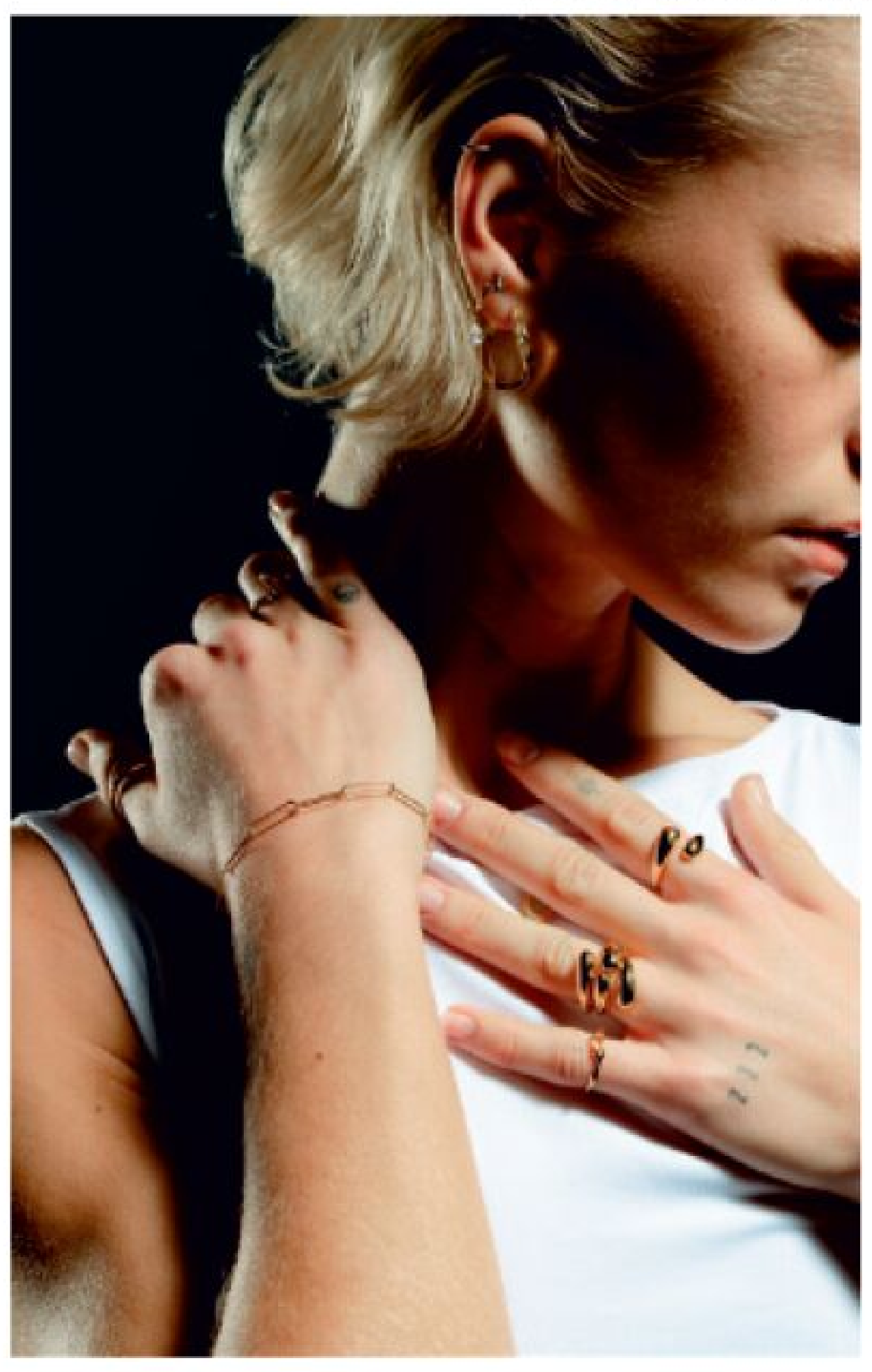
FULLORD

Fullord's Masai Ring in 18k white gold embodies the perfect balance of strength and sensuality. Inspired by the founder's African childhood, its design pays tribute to the iconic spear of the Masai tribe, making it a statement piece of elegance and power. Also available in rose and yellow gold. Designed in Switzerland. Made in Italy. Visit fullord.com and follow @fullordgeneva on IG.

DESMIRAGES

Desmirages is inspired by the effortless charm of luxury hotel resorts and country clubs. The Resort Collection brings this to life with premium terry toweling pieces, made in Portugal from 100% organic cotton. Quick-drying and practical, they let you skip the towel and dive straight into holiday mode. Every moment feels like a five-star getaway at desmirages.com and @desmirages on IG.

BUENA VIDA



Experience high-quality craftsmanship that compliments a luxurious lifestyle without compromising on value, making everyday elegance effortlessly attainable. Buena Vida's jewellery is perfect for those who appreciate the beauty of simplicity and the allure of understated elegance, as shown above. Follow @buenavida.official on IG and labuenavida.co.uk

ASTELLA

Astella is a luxury engagement ring brand, renowned for bespoke designs using Natural and Lab-Grown Diamonds. With a reputation for crafting exquisite jewellery for celebrities, they bring your dream ring to life. Visit astellajewellery.co.uk or follow @astellajewellery on IG to start your custom jewellery journey today.

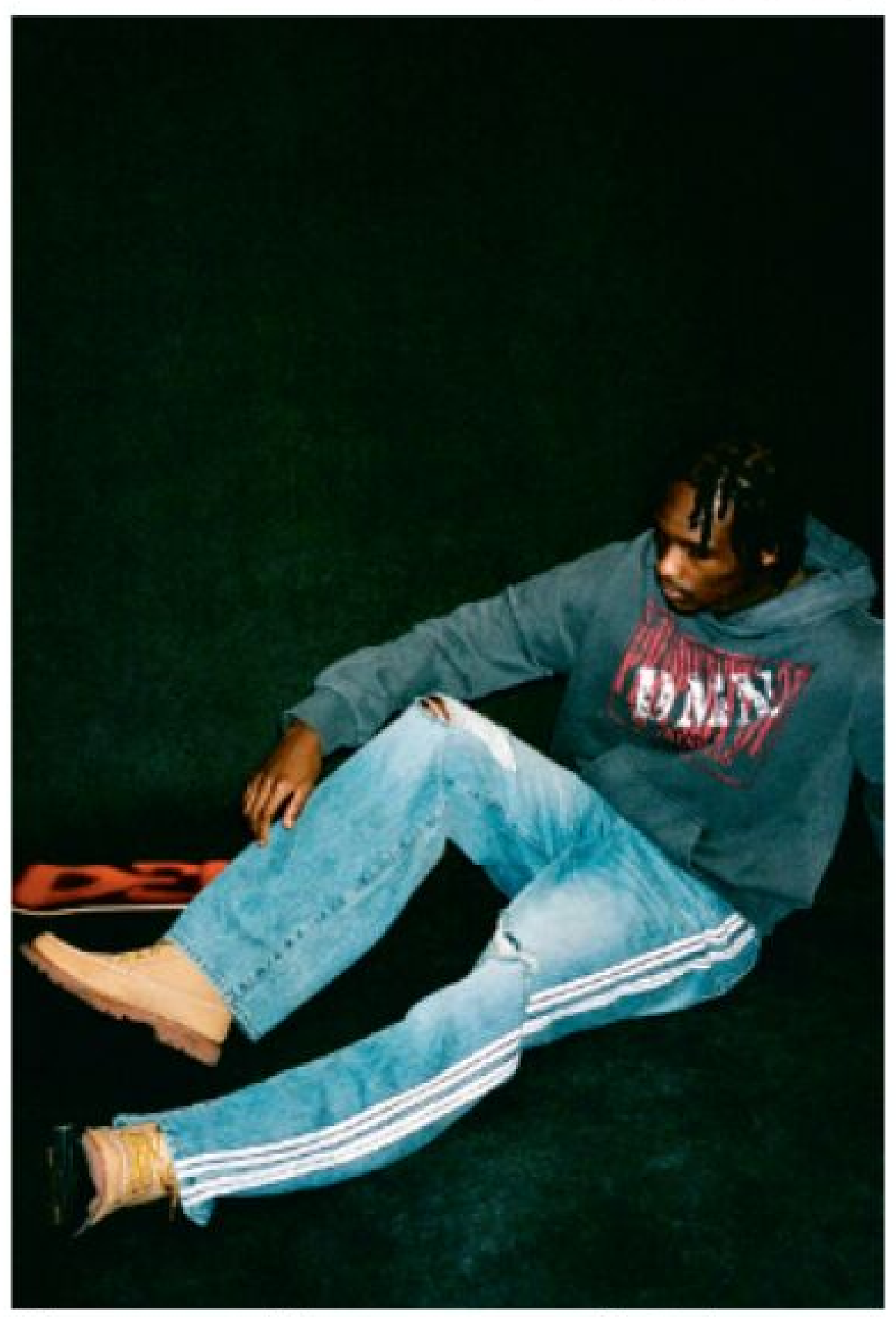
2001AMOUR

2001amour draws heavy inspiration from past and present pop-culture media to design jewellery which evokes feelings of community and nostalgia from their customers. The brand balances between minimalist designs for subtlety and maximalist statement pieces for those who love to stand out. Visit 2001amour.com and follow on IG @2001amour

DONS FORTRESS

Dons Fortress, the home of The O.riginal G.arment. Embodying simplicity, boldness and incontestable identity. Their design language unapologetically pays homage to the greatest silhouette ever crafted.. 'the human form'. Banishing idioms like 'the common hoodie'. Quality is the priority when adorning the physique. Visit donsfortress.com and follow on IG @donsfortress

DEMN STUDIOS



DEMN STUDIOS is tearing up the rulebook on streetwear, fusing vintage aesthetics with premium fabrics for a fearless, statement-making style. Inspired by global fashion hubs, each piece is a bold call to individuality and self-expression. Co-founders Jaffru Jah and Martin Youngah are sparking a movement–fashion with attitude, meaning, and unapologetic energy. demnstudios.com and @demnstudios on IG.

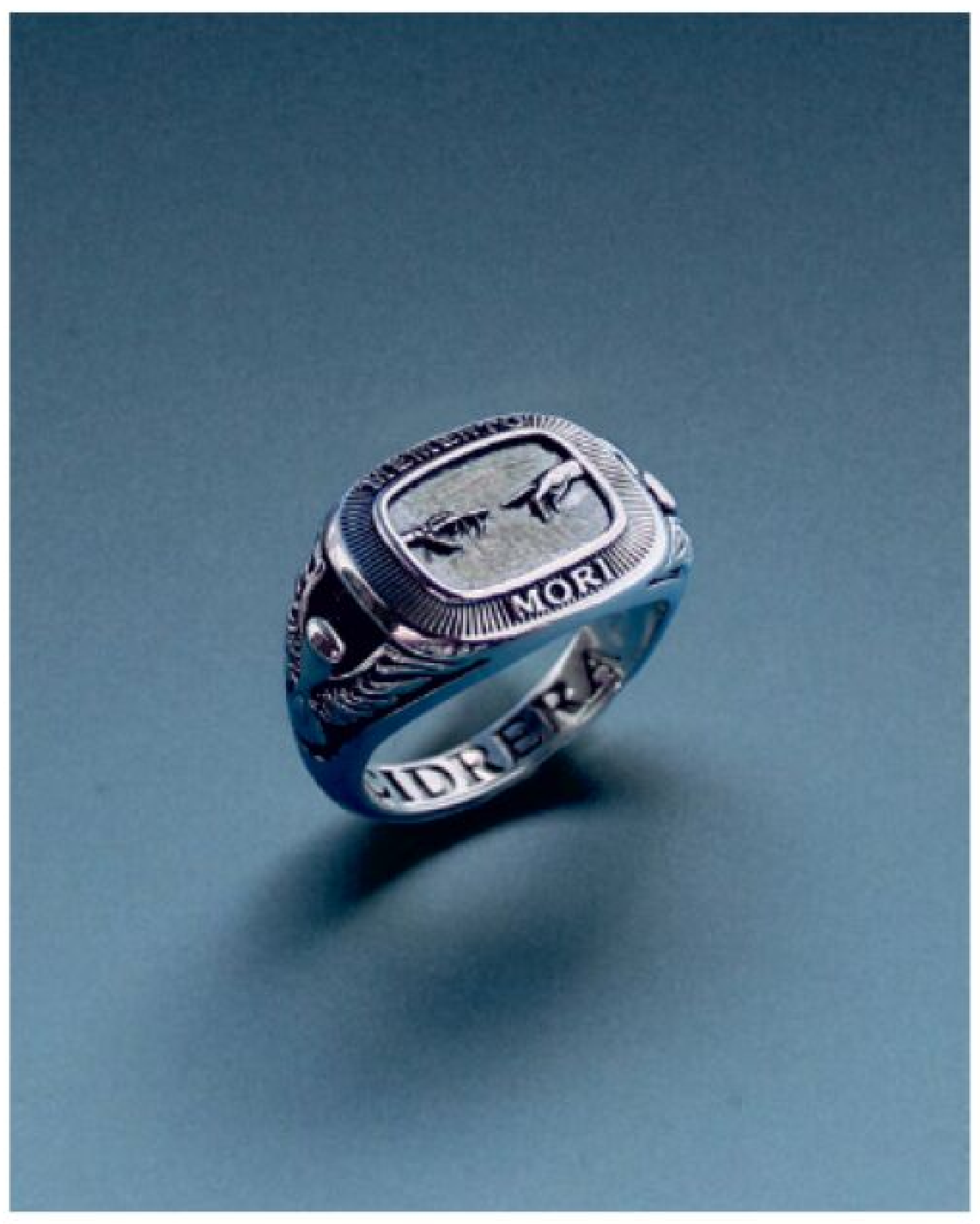
ATRXY

ATRXY London is a mid-luxury brand with year-round essentials. Their mission is to create comfortable pieces, intentionally designed to encourage 'peace of mind'. Visit atrxylondon.com for more information and follow @atrxy.ldn on IG.

EXCLSV

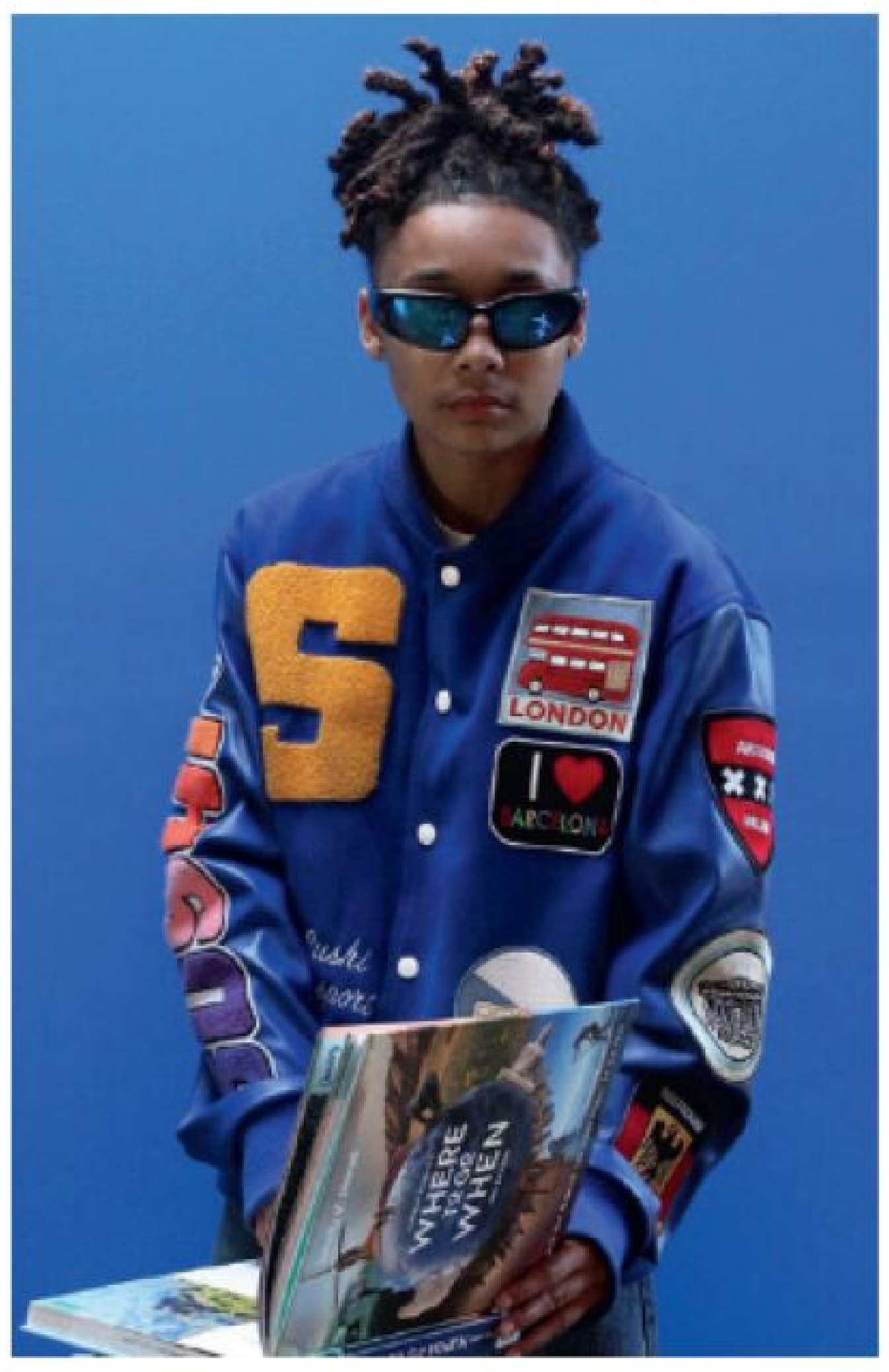
Founded by Fraz Ahmad in 2016, EXCLSV is a Canadian fashion label that draws inspiration from the worlds of art, sports, and music. Every collection blends iconic, timeless designs with the finest materials, creating a fusion of luxury and streetwear. EXCLSV offer a distinctive aesthetic that resonates with the modern creative. Discover more at exclsvofficial.com and connect with them on IG @exclsv. Photography by Eshi Ogbor.

CIDRERA



You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough. Cidrera ® Jewelry, Made to Convey. Visit cidrera.com and @cidrera on IG.

BAD SUSHI



Bad Sushi, hailing from Atlanta, fuses streetwear culture and storytelling with bold designs, capturing the essence of the city. Each piece is a statement, reflecting individuality and creativity. Join the movement and wear your attitude with Bad Sushi-where style meets authenticity. officialbadsushi.com and @badsushiofficial on IG.

BROUILLON

Is there really a simpler, more obvious and beautiful story than that of the collaboration between mother and son? For a year and a half now, their common passion has become one. A son's ideas put into practice by a mother's talent. Come discover Brouillon on IG @brouillon.eu and visit brouillon.store

ARISOX

Belts just got better. Arisox have created an eclectic belt collection to embellish any outfit. Belt V2 available now in a range of colours on arisox.com. Follow @arisox.clo on IG.

GIFTED MISFIT

Gifted Misfit is a streetwear brand rooted in individuality, creativity, and authenticity. They combine bold, modern designs with timeless elements, celebrating those who embrace their unique perspectives. With high-quality materials and a focus on comfort, their pieces make a statement both on and off the streets. Visit giftedmisfit.co and @giftedmisfitco on IG.

AIKENDI

Jewellery that knows no bounds and doesn't discriminate. AIKENDI's pieces are made in Turkey and empower consumers to show their unique, unfiltered style. Worldwide shipping available. Visit aikendi.com and browse @aikendiofficial on IG.

In With the New

1. Areias Studio redefines sophisticated ceramics through timeless design and artisanal craftsmanship. Each piece tells a story, blending tradition with innovation to enhance modern living spaces. Explore their creations at **areiasstudio.com** and follow **@areiasstudio** on IG for inspiration.

2. Pullman Editions creates striking, limited edition Art Deco posters that exude vintage sophistication. Featuring winter sports, iconic destinations and classic automobiles, each design captures the glamour of a golden era. With over 100 unique pieces available at £420 each buy online at **pullmaneditions.com** or call **020 7387 6039**.

3. DoisDois - where bold design meets Portuguese textile heritage. Crafted with premium, sustainable materials, each blanket is a statement of style and comfort. Inspired by graphic precision and timeless elegance, DoisDois transforms everyday interiors into curated sanctuaries of warmth and sophistication. **doisdois.com** and **@doisdois.store** on IG.

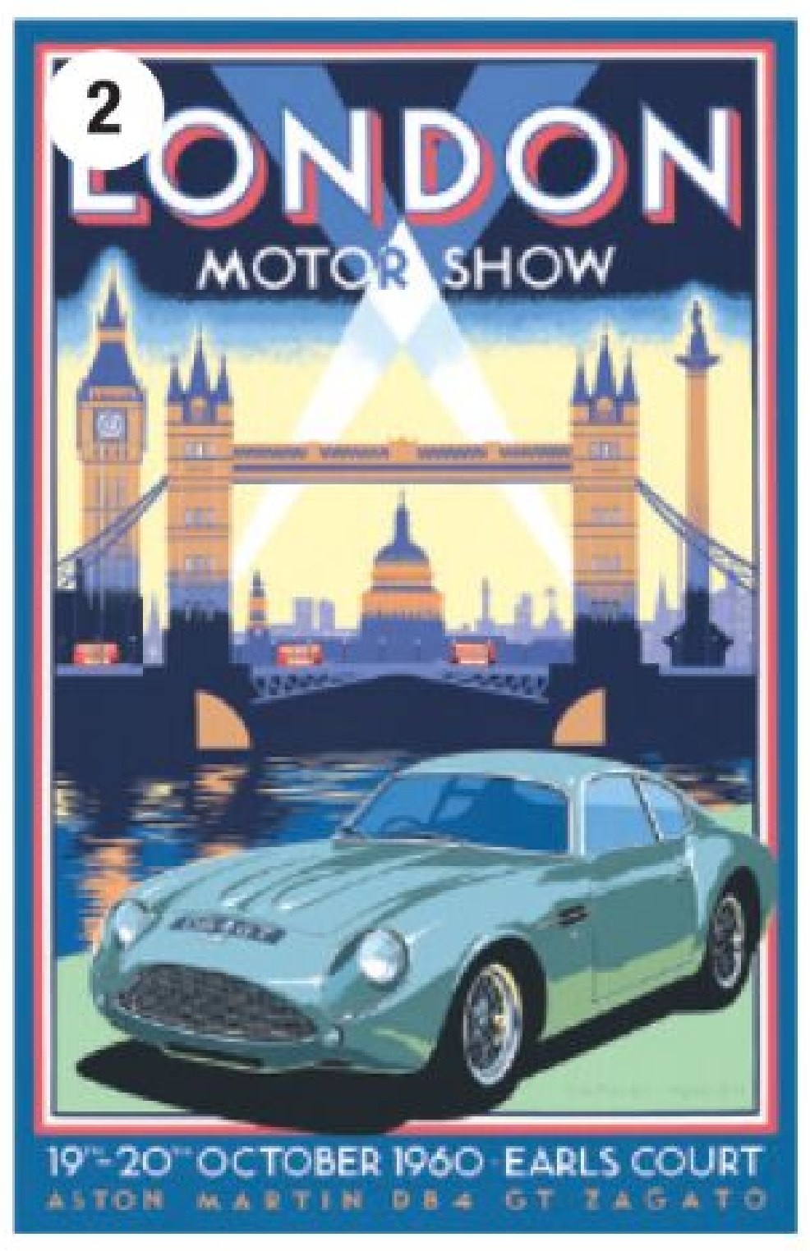
4. Oryx crystal coffee glasses are designed to enhance the aroma and flavour of your daily beverage, each glass is exquisitely handcrafted by a master glassblower. Limited to just 1000 pieces of each type, they also make the perfect exclusive gift. Visit **oryxcrystalware.com** and follow them on IG: **@oryx.crystalware**

5. NAMIE redefines modern elegance with their collection of premium homeware. Each piece blends timeless sophistication with sustainability. Explore luxury decor that transforms your space. From stylish dispensers to high-quality wall brackets and fixtures, Namie Home is perfect for any home or business. Visit **namiehome.com** and follow on IG: **@namiehome**

6. Alina Altukhova is a California based abstract artist, LAAA member and architect. Her artwork follows abstractionism, blending it with fashion and pop art. She recently exhibited at LA Art Show and at The Other Art Fair Brooklyn. Alina's works are in private collections internationally. See more at **altukhovaart.com** and on IG **@altukhova.artist**

7. Bold. Timeless. Unstoppable. Don't just fill a room - own it. Curated for the unique home that demands more than ordinary, **Belvoir Antique**'s statement pieces are built to last, with craftsmanship that holds its value. Sustainable, iconic, and designed to turn heads - this is style that endures. Visit **belvoirantiques.com** and **@belvoir_antiques** on IG. Image by @alderwoodhousedesign

8. Trip Map, founded by Marta and Paulius in Lithuania, offers premium-quality maps that seamlessly blend aesthetic appeal with functionality. Crafted in collaboration with expert cartographers, each map features precise geographical details while serving as a distinctive interior accent. Printed on high-quality canvas, these interactive pieces evolve with your travels, sparking memories and inspiring new journeys. Their growing collection includes world, regional, and country-specific maps. Visit **tripmap.com** and **@tripmapworld** on IG.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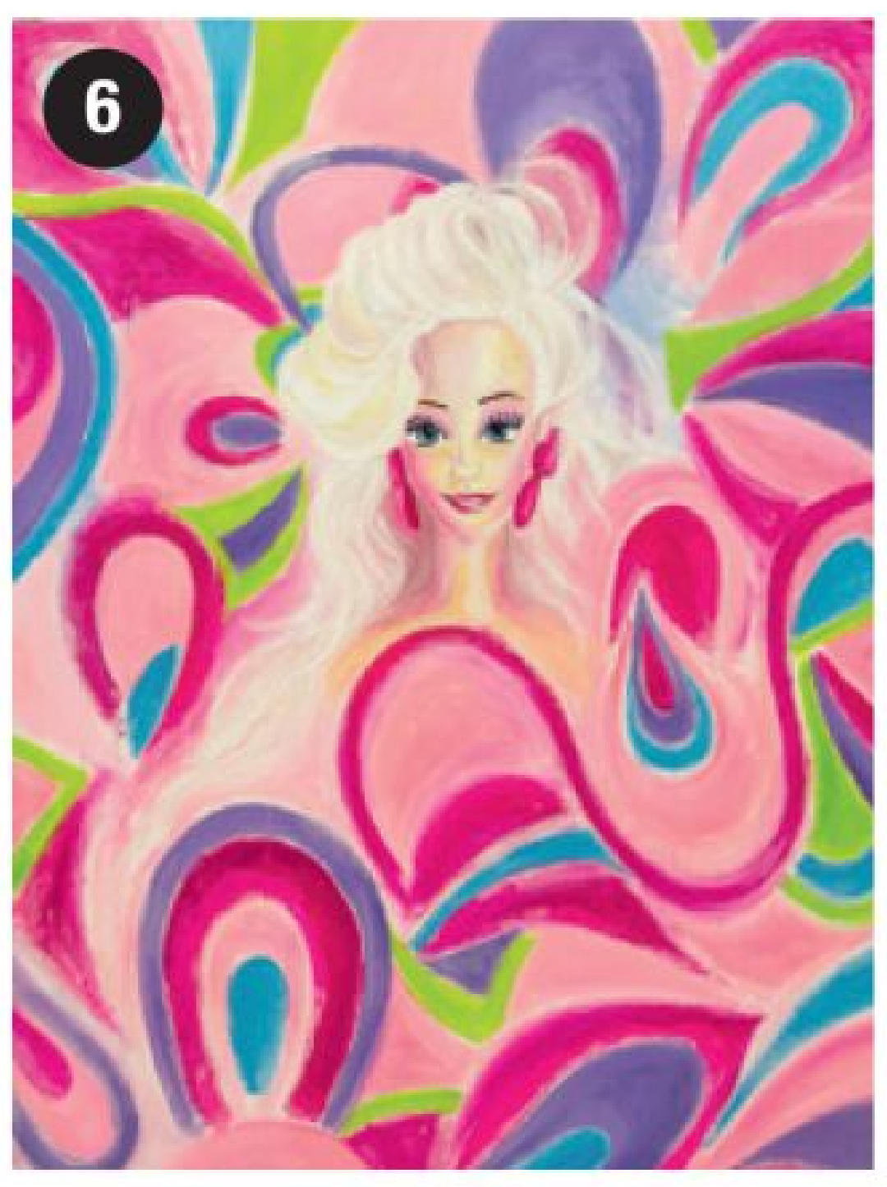
LONDON
MOTOR SHOW
19th-20th OCTOBER 1960 · EARLS COURT
ASTON MARTIN DB4 GT ZAGATO

5
BODY WASH
SHAMPOO
CONDITIONER



Level Up

1

2

TEE UP YOUR GAME

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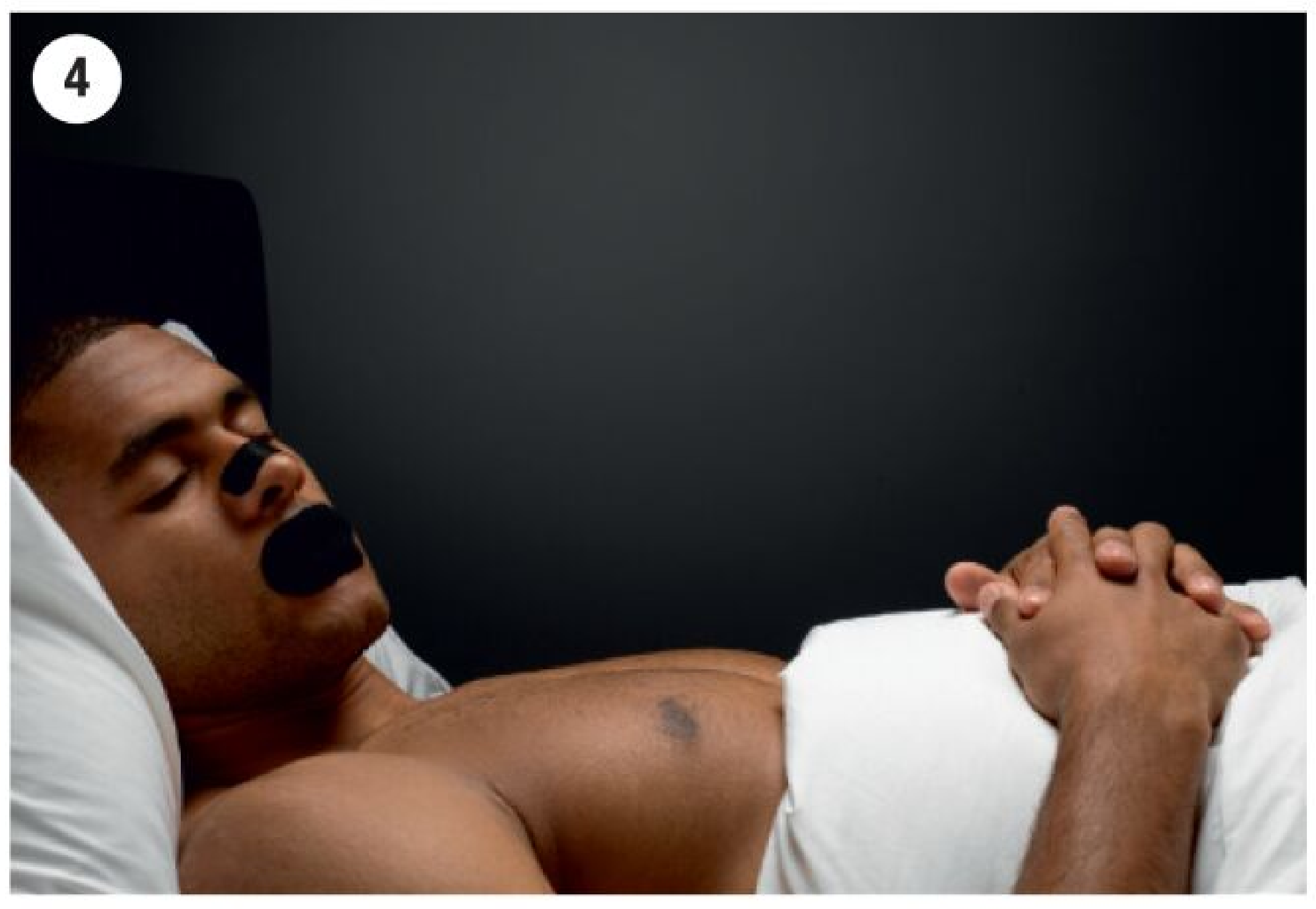

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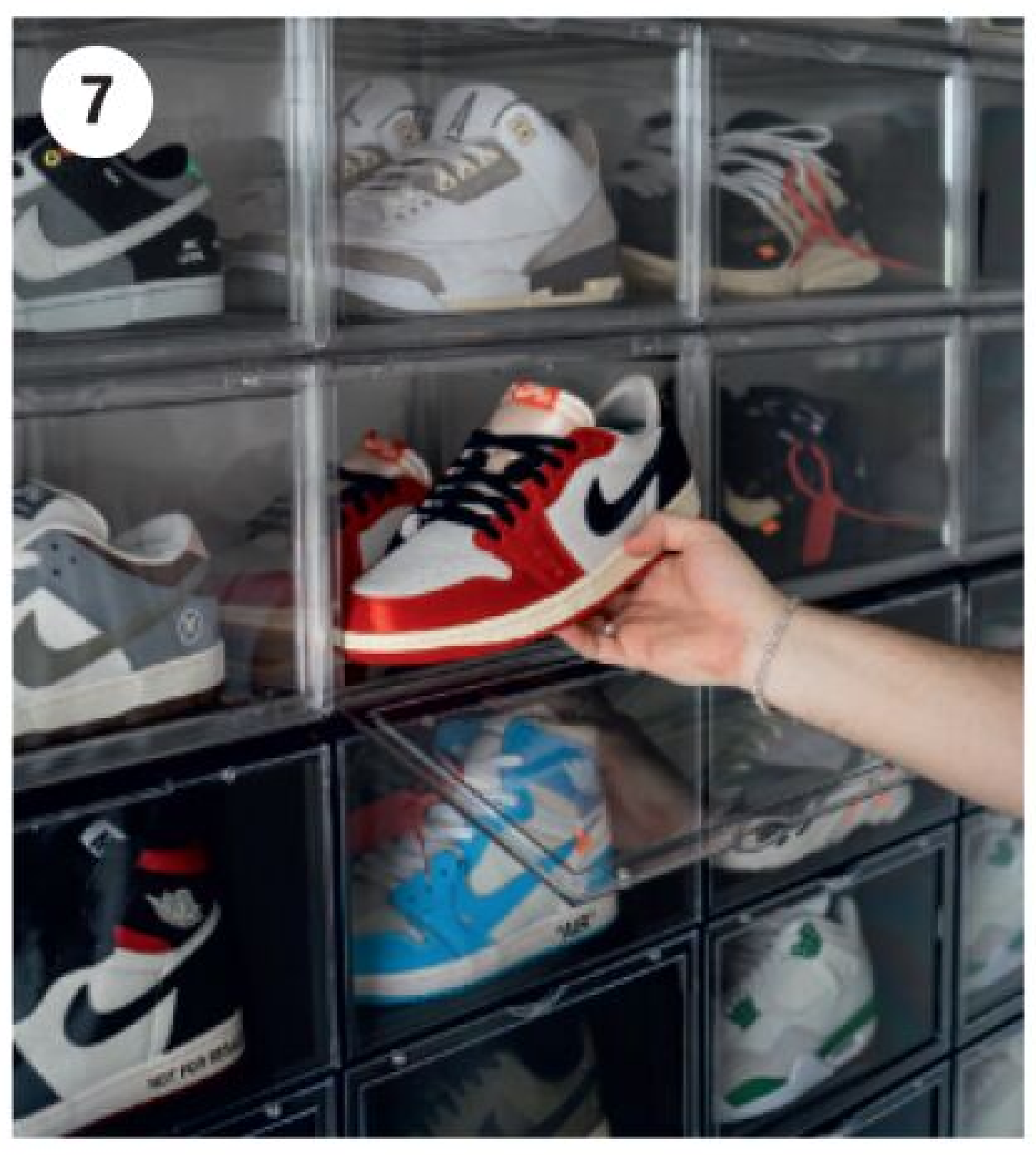

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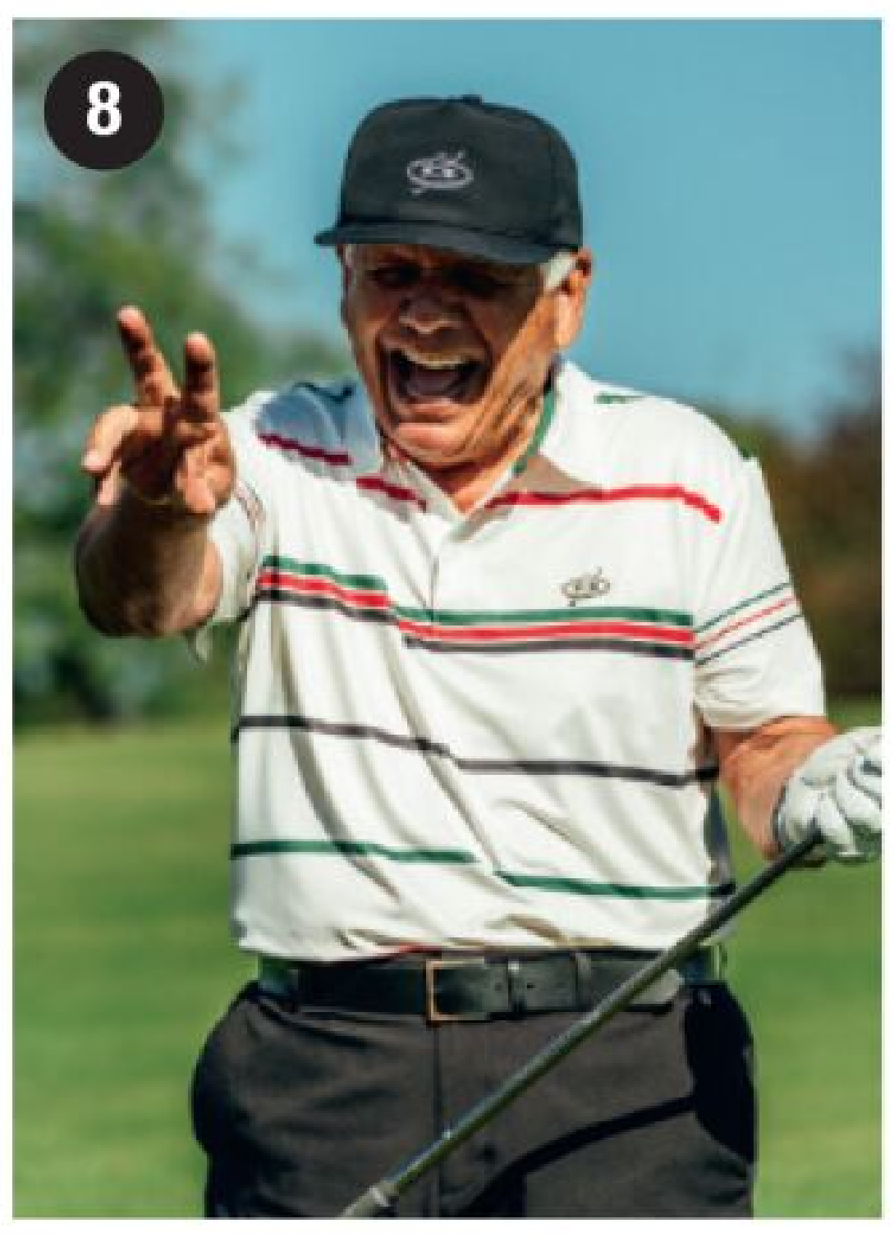

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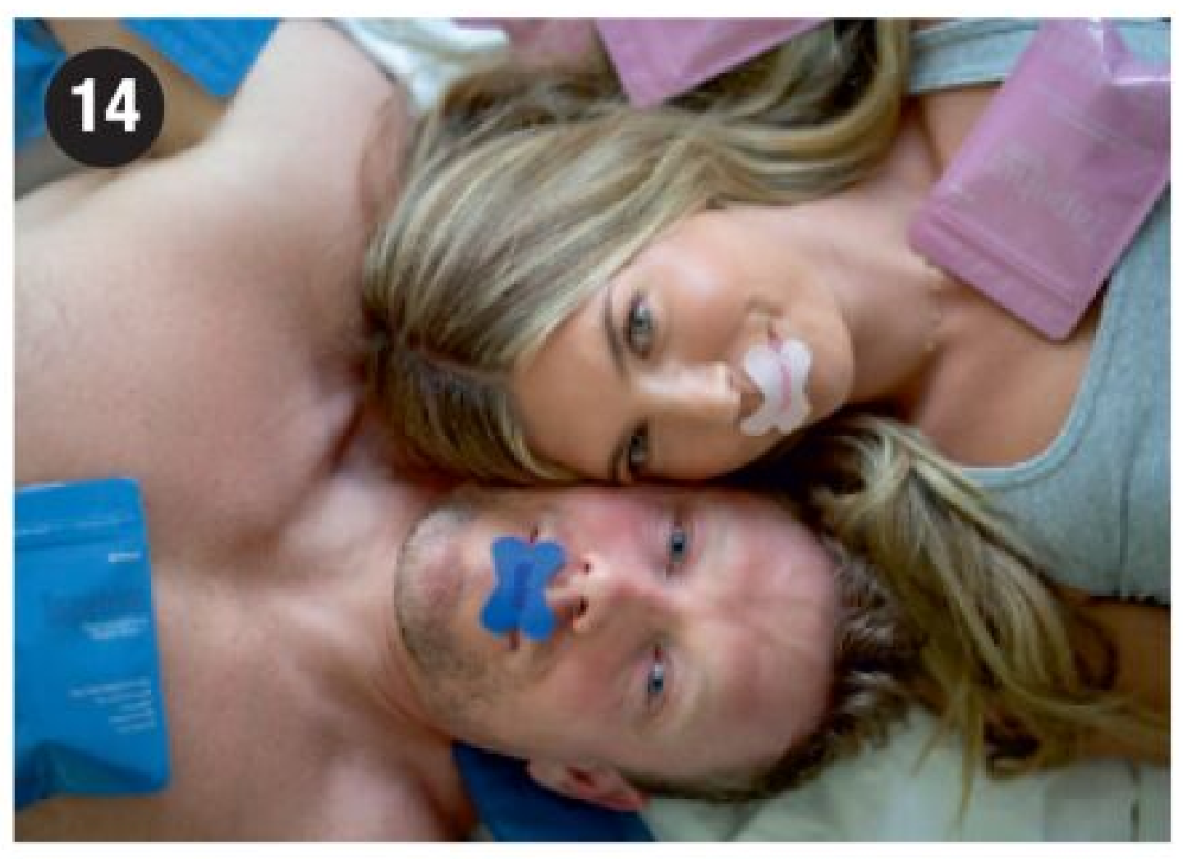

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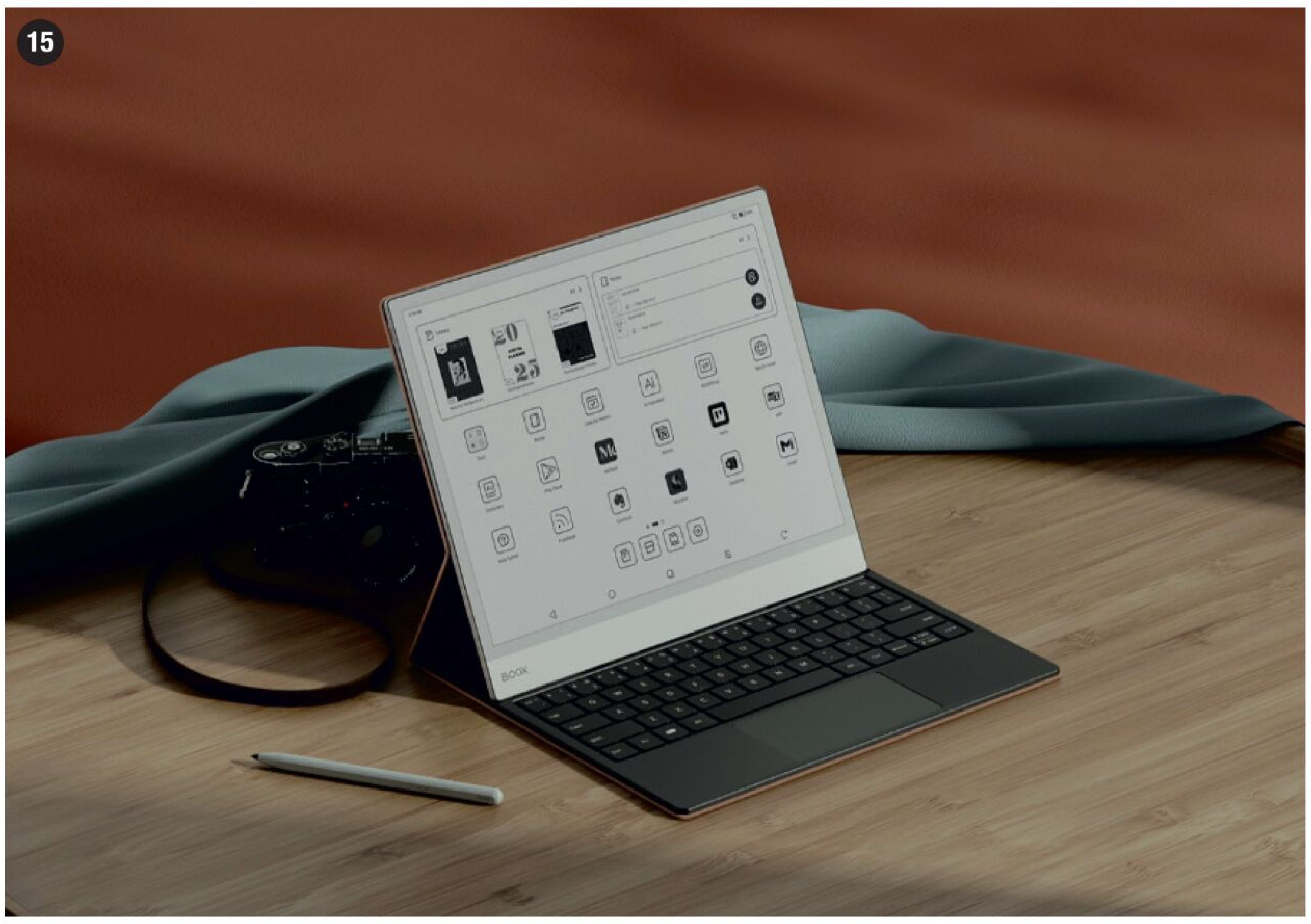


1. Inspired by the glam and artistry of NYC, **VivanTee Golf** redefines premium performance with designer golf gloves and accessories all across the UK and globally. Golfers are injecting their game with buttery soft leathers and bold metals. Grip with style and confidence at **vivanteegolf.com** and follow **@vivanteegolf** on IG.

2. Based in Milan - Italy, **3 PUTT ROUND** is a golf accessory brand focusing on making golf more playful, accessible and engaging. Here's a snapshot of their Red Golf Tee Matches. Available in a multiple of colour ways. Visit their full collection on **3puttround.com** and **@3puttround** on IG.

3. Aquilo Sports is a dynamic company dedicated to revolutionising the wellness industry by developing innovative and high-quality athletic recovery devices. The Aquilo Sports CCT1500 System combines cold therapy and compression therapy and aims to reduce swelling and soreness. The perfect choice for athletes and fitness enthusiasts. Visit **aquilosports.com** and **@aquilosports** on IG.

4. Mouth breathing is destroying your sleep - and your health! **Longevity** Sleep Tape and Breathe Tape encourage nasal breathing - this simple change can improve sleep quality, facial structure and overall health. Join 150,000+ users who've transformed over 5 million nights of sleep! Visit **longevityuk.net** or follow **@longevityofficial** on IG to learn more.

5. Padel Psycho®—designed by real players, born from the need for high-performance gear that truly reflects the sport's energy and the spirit of the fun player. They prioritise style and functionality over cost-cutting, staying true to their DNA: Mexican colours, Dubai design, and bold, dynamic personalities. Padel is a social, thrilling game—their gear is made for everyone, not just the elite. Visit **padelpsycho.com** and IG: **@padelpsycho**

6. Unsanctioned Athletics have been redefining racing in the UK for the last two years with their chaotic running events. Accompanied by their latest merch drop 'The Heritage Collection' which creates a look that's made for both town & the track, there's a big 2025 ahead for UA. Visit **@unsanctioned.athletics** on IG & **unsanctionedathletics.com** to shop the collection.

7. SNEAK SPPLY present their fully transparent crates to see every angle of your shoe. With a unique, slick design, their crates offer full 360 UV protection on your shoes to mitigate any sun/light exposure. Fitting up to a UK13, you can stack them as high as possible, creating a cool display unique to you, using your shoes. Visit **sneakspply.com** and follow **@sneak_spply** on IG.

8. Super Mex Golf is a Lee Trevino legacy golf brand. Inspired by retro golf style and Lee's major championship moments, Super Mex is a unique offering for the modern golfer. One of the best logos in golf, backed by a history that is unique and inspiring. Visit **supermexgolf.com** and **@supermexgolf** on IG.

9. Elevate your tech accessories with **Ryan London**'s Premium Leather iPhone Cases. Meticulously crafted for the new iPhone 16 series, this case combines elegance with durability. Ideal for the discerning individual who values both style and protection. Discover more at **ryanlondon.com** and follow **@ryan.london** on IG.

10. Experience the revolutionary power of OSO by **Laxis** , the first AI-powered earbuds to transform how you work. With intuitive chat features, real-time transcription, and effortless task management, OSO optimises your workflow. Perfect for professionals on the move, OSO empowers you to accomplish more with ease. Discover more at **oso8.com** and follow on IG: **@meet.oso**

11. Nook Saunas blends contemporary design with advanced infrared technology, with the aim to deliver a luxury wellness experience straight to your home. Used by athletes and health professionals, Nook saunas offer the perfect combination of style, comfort, and functionality, with delivery and installation included for a seamless experience. Visit **nooksaunas.co.uk** and follow **@nooksaunasuk** on IG.

12. Push redefines creatine. Perfect if you've struggled with consistency or it's your first time taking creatine. No chalky powders, just a delicious, simple way to help to improve your performance daily. Three gummies, 5g of creatine. The gummies are designed to aid movement, focus, and recovery. Backed by science, 3rd party tested. Push for athletes, creatives, and anyone moving. Visit **pushgummies.com** and follow on IG: **@pushgummies**

13. Heritage meets Hip-Hop at **OG Golf Apparel**. Sampling the traditional patterns and fashions of golfing attire, plaids, argyles, tartans and herringbones etc, OG Golf Apparel remixes them to infuse a Hip-Hop flavour into their bold, colourful, and expressive styles. They aim to diversify the golf wear market, and attract younger people of all races, ethnicities, genders, and socio-economic backgrounds to take up and enjoy the game of golf. Visit **oggolfapparel.com** and **@oggolfapparel** on IG.

14. The sleep hack you didn't know you needed! **Tapehim & Tapeher** are revolutionising recovery, health and energy. Designed for comfort and style, their unique mouth tape promotes nasal breathing, stops snoring, and helps you wake up feeling refreshed—every single morning. Visit **tapeher.com** online and **@tapehersleep** on IG.

15. Your Thoughts, Seamlessly Connected. Sometimes, the best ideas come from a clear mind. Unleash your brightest ideas and free your mind with the **BOOX** Note Max. Free from front light, bask in sunlit clarity on every page. With a stunning 300 PPI resolution, every word and curve of ink comes alive. Write and read with peace of mind on the 13.3" monochrome ePaper notebook. Explore more at **shop.boox.com** and **@boox.global** on IG.

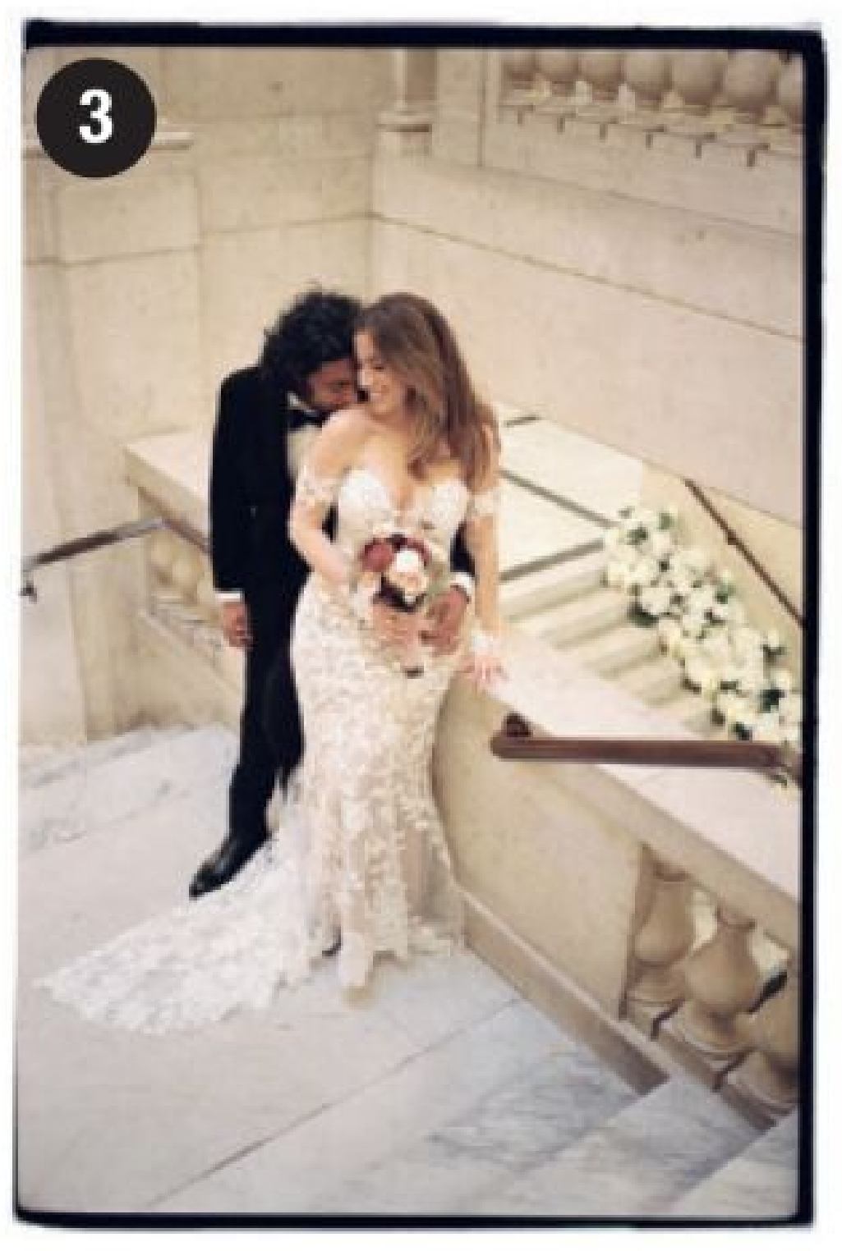
With Love

1. Founded by designer Ally Nissan, **Soirée Miami Beach** is revolutionising luxury swimwear with its signature sparkly, irritation-free Italian lurex. Designed to blend comfort, class, and confidence, the brand proves that the dreamiest swimwear pieces sparkle but don't scratch. Visit **soireemiamibeach.com** and follow them on IG **@soireemiamibeach**

2. Based in Canada, documenting worldwide, **Sara Claudia** is a luxury wedding photographer specialising in a unique storytelling experience on both digital & film formats for her couples. Blending the documentary & unposed with a refined, editorial feel seamlessly merges two timeless styles into one. Visit **saraclaudiaphoto.ca** or **@saraclaudiaphoto** on IG.

3. Jessica Gwyneth captures modern weddings with a timeless, film-inspired style. Focusing on authentic storytelling and emotional connections, Jessica's photography preserves genuine moments and unique details, celebrating each couple's personality. From candid interactions to scenic diversity, every image reflects the joy and intimacy of the day, creating a lasting narrative that's both effortlessly elegant and deeply personal. UK based, available worldwide. Contact Jessica **jessicagwynethphotog@gmail.com** and follow on IG **@jessicagwynnethphotog**

4. Built in New York, backed by science. **Mela** creates apple leather goods that prove you don't have to compromise - exceptional quality, consciously crafted, with the planet in mind. Sustainability, with style. Visit **melasworld.com** and follow on IG: **@mela.newyork**

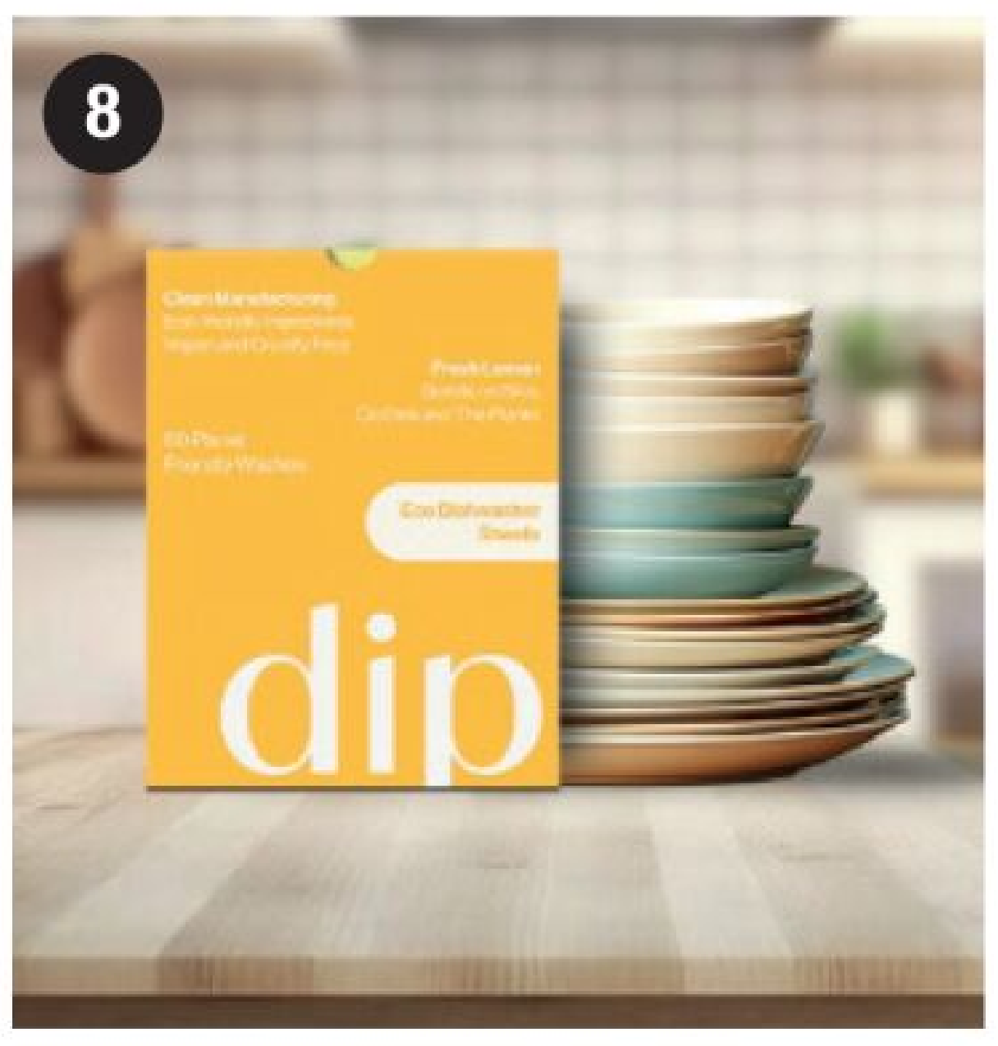


5. Mila & Co. is a family-run brand, that was started with a simple idea: to create stylish, durable, and affordable children's clothing made from natural materials that can be cherished and passed down. Their collection offers organic, eco-friendly clothing and accessories for both women and children, made with care and attention to detail. Visit **shopmilaandco.com** and follow **@shop.milaandco** on IG.

6. Karen Kriegel is a Brazilian designer based in Brooklyn handcrafting wearable size inclusive jewellery for all. This ring was artistically sculpted in wax to achieve this molten look. Explore more unique pieces at **kriegelkaren.com** and follow on IG at **@karenkriegel**

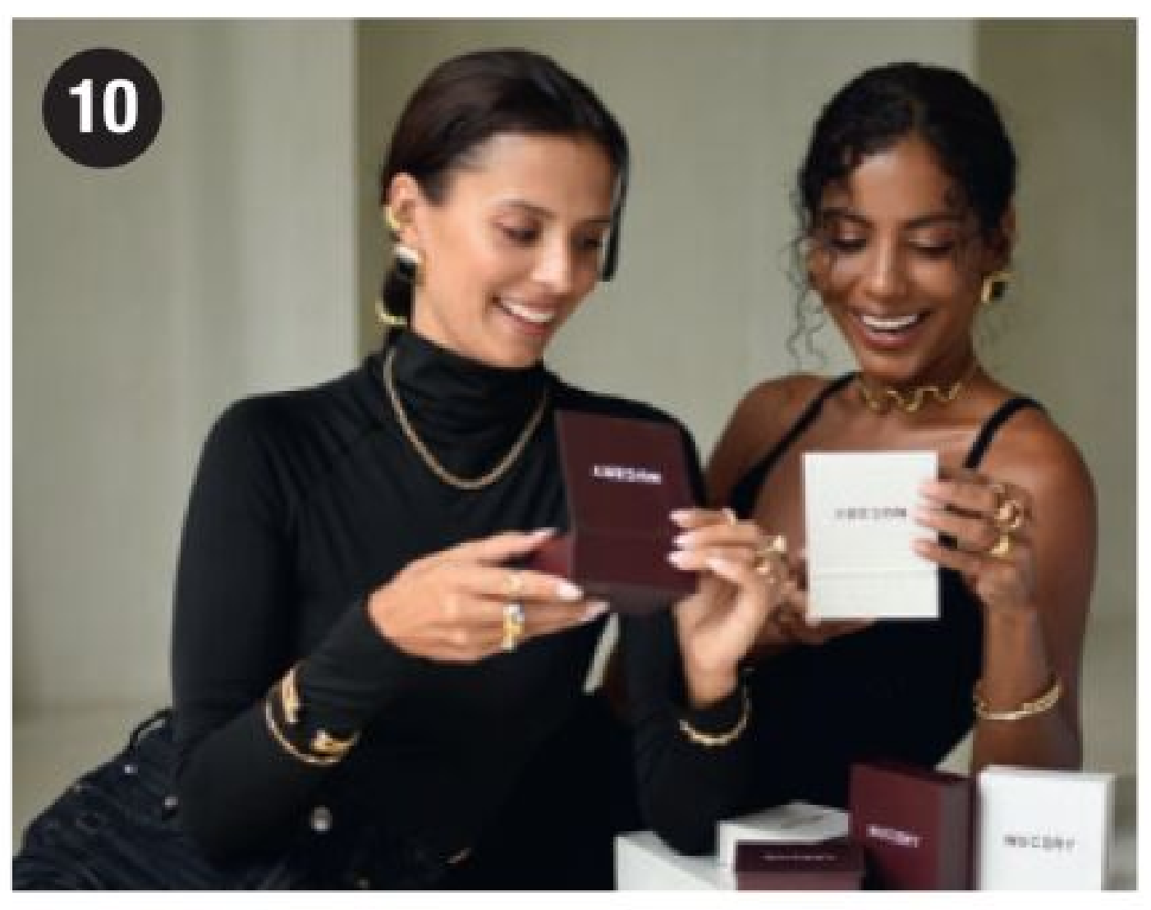
7. Inspired by the balance of rugged masculinity and refined craftsmanship, these **Lodorfo** bracelets are designed for the modern man. The braided leather and silk combination adds an artisanal touch, while the stainless-steel clasp provides a sleek and secure finish. Perfect for any occasion, compliments both casual and formal looks. Discover more at **lodorfo.com** and **@lodorfo_handmade** on IG. Photo by George Ntoumas. Use Code GQ15 for 15% off your next order (expires 09/06/25).

8. Dip is reimagining laundry and dishwasher detergent, and reducing our exposure to everyday toxins. Their super-convenient washing sheets are made using plant-derived and lower-impact ingredients. They're better for your health and the environment, whilst still cleaning brilliantly. Use code GQ15 for 15% off at **wearedip.co.uk** (expires 09/06/25) and follow **@wearedip.co** on IG.



9. Glow made simple. **LAZY TAN**'s Self-Tanning Mist aims to offer the look of a natural, sun-free tan in four hours, dries quickly, appears non-streaky and there is nothing to wash off. Infused with Kakadu Plum and Vitamin E. It helps to leave your skin feeling hydrated. Visit **lazytan.com** and follow **@lazytan_** on IG.

10. Nucery: The Stars of Today, Treasured for Generations. Jewellery isn't just worn - it's lived in. It holds meaning, moments, and everything that makes you, you. Nucery craft pieces that feel like they've always been yours and stay with you for life. And those who wear them? They're Nucery Stars. More than customers, more than ambassadors - they are their stars. Because at Nucery, you're not just part of the brand. You are the brand. Visit **nucery.co** and follow on IG **@ncyplus**



11. Latham & Neve – known for their stunning contemporary hand-made British jewellery since 1997. Featured is the unique Ripple Bangle in beaten silver with 18ct gold. Ballroom bangles, awesome earrings, ravishing rings and much much more.
To buy online, stockists or discover the most perfect gift, visit **lathamandneve.co.uk** and follow **@lathamneve** on IG.

12. FABLE & BEAR is a cosy haven for organic cotton knitwear and accessories, with a range of beautifully knitted pieces with adorable hand-embroidered characters. The collection is unisex, timeless, contemporary, playful and fun, and makes the perfect gift for the little people in your life. Visit **fableandbear.com** and follow **@fable_and_bear** on IG.

13. '**How to Create a Luxury Fashion Brand**' is an essential guide for designers and entrepreneurs aspiring to launch their own brand. Written by Denesh Dean, a seasoned expert with 17 years of experience in the fashion industry, this meticulously crafted book provides a comprehensive blueprint for building a luxury brand - from concept to completion. **deneshdean.com** and **@deneshdean** on IG.

14. Experience the enchanting allure of **MOH**'s exquisite unisex fragrance collection. From floral elegance with Rose Dose to the sophisticated Innocuous Oud, spicy Tobac, gourmand Honeyism, fresh Quixotic, earthy Green Gravity, and mysterious woody London Lover, there's a scent for every mood. Discover online at **mohlondon.com** and follow **@themohlondon** on IG.

15. 'Every Note Tailored to Perfection' is the cornerstone of **The J.M. Chamber Players**, an immensely-talented, luxury string ensemble specialising in live music for weddings and corporate events. The collective is comprised of NYC's finest musicians - all hand-picked from the top ensembles in the area including Lincoln Center, Broadway, and around the globe. They source the most sought-after music selections, from Bach to Bridgerton, and you can also request custom arrangements to suit your event. Hear their work at **jmchamberplayers.com** and follow their IG **@jmchamberplayers**

16
Neso Wellness

16. Elevate your self-care moments with **NESO WELLNESS**' premium incense papers. This unique incense features thoughtfully curated positive affirmations + space for you to write and release. Scented using sustainably sourced and organic essential oils, this is a purchase you can feel good about. Visit **nesowellness.com** and follow **@nesowellness** on IG.

17. Dolcetto Designs encourages self expression through jewellery. Combining playful, bold and colourful elements with ethically sourced and sustainable materials, such as recycled gold and silver. Their pieces allow you to treat yourself to guilt free indulgence. Shop at **dolcettodesigns.com.au** and follow **@dolcettodesigns** on IG.

18. Hést is a Norwegian lifestyle brand redefining modern elegance with luxury womenswear and menswear. Featuring clean lines, premium quality, and timeless wearability, Hést inspires you to embrace your true, authentic self. Celebrated across Europe for its effortless sophistication. Hést is more than fashion, it's your next step towards confidence and lasting style. Image by Sigrid Edvartsen. Visit **heest.no** and **@heest.no** on IG.

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Cutting Edge

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3
Dr.Chill
Dr.Chill
Dr.Chill

1. vinsk is the unisex care brand from Germany, proudly breaking boundaries. The Beard Care Set is the ultimate all-in-one solution for a healthy, well-groomed beard. Featuring a Beard Roller to promote beard growth and improve the appearance of your skin, Beard Oil for softness, hydration, and a refreshing scent, and a Beard Brush for perfect styling and control. Premium care, every day! Visit **vinsk-care.com** and follow on IG: **@vinskcare**

2. Inspired by the traditional Athenian Barbershop rituals, **KORRES** presents Athenian Grooming 2 In 1 Hair+Body Wash, specifically designed for both hair and body. It aims to gently cleanse and invigorate with uplifting notes of fresh bergamot and leather. Boosted with Achillea Millefolium & Marjoram extracts and Vitamin B3. Revive the Athenian barbershop experience at **uk.korres.com** & follow **@korres** on IG.

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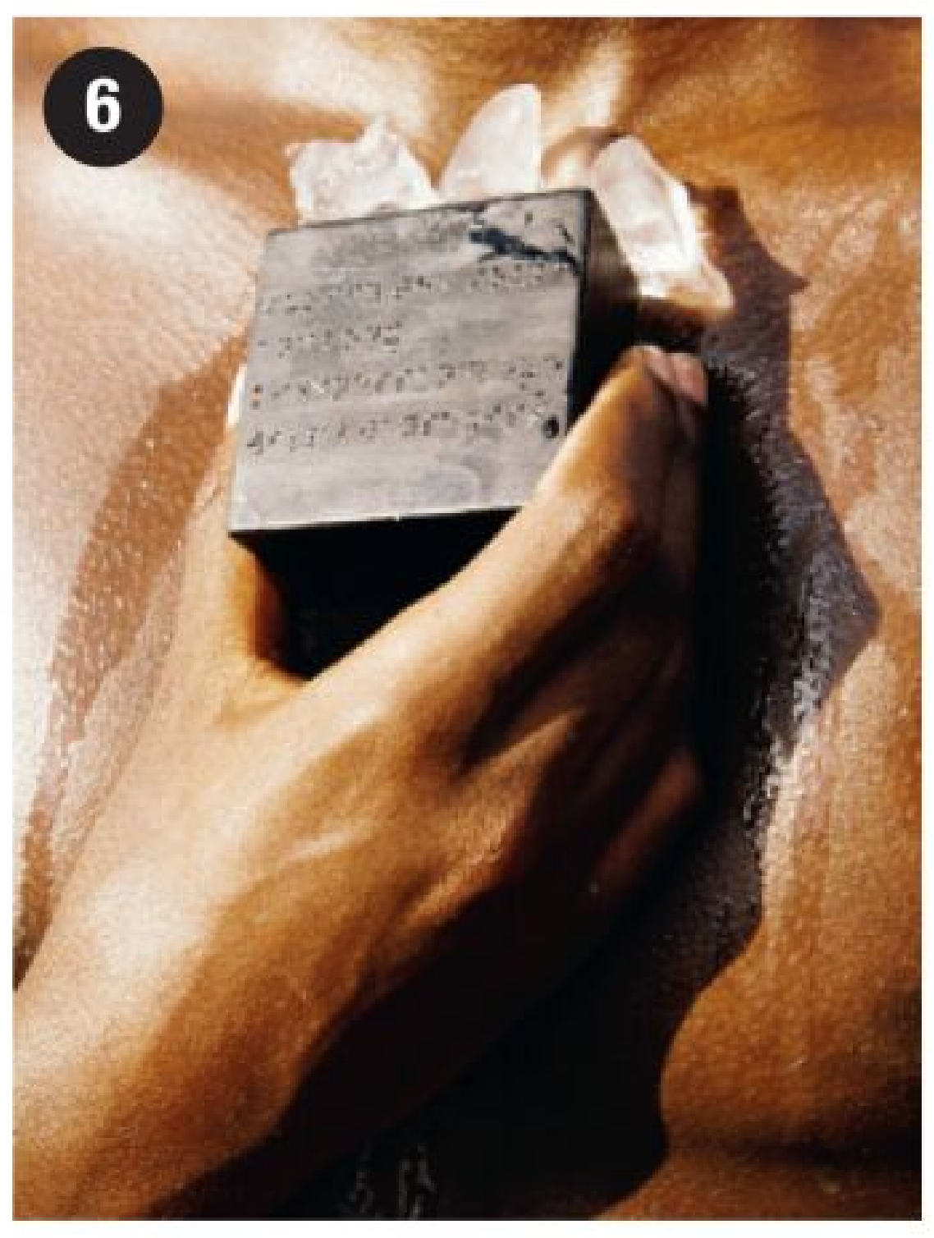
CLAY
COOL MINT
COOL MINT
STYLING CREAM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3. DR. CHILL, located in Byron Bay Australia, offers premium certified organic hemp oil products designed to promote well-being and help you feel more relaxed. With a focus on quality, they grow their own hemp and each full-spectrum oil is crafted in-house, ensuring purity and a holistic approach to finding your zen and spreading good vibes. Visit **drchill.com.au** and follow **@drchillhempoil** on IG.

4. SKIN|CYCLES Clarify Complexion Serum is designed to help you achieve the look of clearer, smoother skin. It is powered by 2% Salicylic Acid, Niacinamide, and Ectoin. The product aims to unclog pores, fight the look of breakouts, and soothe the feeling of irritation. Perfect post-shave, it is designed to prevent ingrown hairs. Stay sharp, stay clear—because great skin is always in style. Visit **skincyles.com** and follow **@skincyles** on IG.

5. Justice Haircare's Men's Range delivers professional-quality styling and care with minimal effort. Infused with active botanicals, their formulas aim to provide hold, definition, and hydration for healthy, well-groomed hair every day. Elevate your routine with salon-quality products designed for confidence and convenience. Visit **justicehair.co.uk** and follow **@justice_professional** on IG.

7

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Buff
Buff
Buff

6. DÉMI.BAI is a fragrance designer's brand from Shanghai, China. Their signature Black Essential Oil Soap, adopts the classic fragrance of a signature perfume. It features raised Braille to enhance the user experience, with a moisturising formula that feels comfortable, smooth, and non-greasy. Discreetly luxurious, it's perfect for active lifestyles, including sports and outdoor activities. A versatile scent that fits in any bag, ensuring you stay fresh anytime, anywhere. Take it with you today on **demibai.com** and follow **@demi.bai** on IG.

7. Biöm is a modern self-care brand redefining oral wellness with innovative, science-backed products. Their flagship NOBS toothpaste tablets feature 5% nano-hydroxyapatite and a clean formula without unnecessary additives. Designed for both effectiveness and convenience, their products support a healthy oral microbiome without compromise. Visit **betterbiom.com** and follow **@betterbiom** on IG.

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AYIRA
AYIRA

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Summer Solace
Summer Solace

8. Buff is on a mission to create high-performance skincare for athletes. Buff's Gym Bundle includes its refreshing foaming cleanser, reviving vitamin C serum, and hydrating daily moisturiser. This set aims to keep your skin feeling energised, protected and ready for your next workout. Visit **skinbuff.co.uk** and follow **@the.buffco** on IG.

9. Washing your hair just got simpler. **AYIRA BEAUTY** develops research driven hair and scalp products that aim to nourish your hair with moisture, leaving it feeling smoother, less knotty and more manageable. Whether your hair is straight, wavy, curly or coily - AYIRA BEAUTY has you covered. Visit **ayira-beauty.com** and IG: **@ayira_beauty**

10. Phatstix. The everything balm for lips, faces and places. From chapped hands to weather-beaten skin – it's become essential kit for cyclists and outdoor enthusiasts. Made in the UK with 100% natural ingredients by qualified skincare and grooming expert, Thom Watson. Use GQ20 for 20% off (expires 30/03/25) at **phatstix.net** and follow **@phat.stix** on IG.

11. Summer Solace Tallow was created by founder Megan Bre Camp. The brand is dedicated to producing slow-made, organic tallow-based skincare and home goods. Summer Solace prides itself on having an array of aromatherapeutic balms, soaps, and candles, each meticulously formulated to create evocative and unique scent profiles. Visit **summersolacetallow.com** and follow on IG: **@summersolacetallow**

12
12 WESTON
LONDON
ROSES FUMÉE | XX
EXTRAIT DE PARFUM | 50ml
AROMATIQUE
EPICÉE
PRIVÉ LUXE

13
Chamomile
Chamomile

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12. 12 WESTON LONDON 's Gender-Inclusive Parfum Extrait and Concentré's are some of the most luxurious on the market. Handmade to concentrations of 27-55% at their Central London Studio, their scents are signature scent worthy whilst being exceptionally long- lasting, trail-blazing, Vegan and cruelty free. Artisan Extrait De Parfum. Handmade In London. Discover more at **12westonlondon.com** and follow **@12westonlondon** on IG.

13. The Dark Island Soap Co. are a multi-award winning soap business based in Stirlingshire, Scotland. Renowned for their love of botanical and herbal infused soaps, each bar is at least 90% certified organic, palm oil and cruelty free, with the majority of their range being vegan friendly! Visit **thedarkislandsoapco.com** and follow **@thedarkislandsoapco** on socials.

14. WOHA Parfums is a project that seeks the fusion between architecture and the world of aromas and fragrances, giving life to a collection called 'Liquid Architecture'. This fusion seeks to find a means of expression, evoke spaces and, of course, capture situations through the different stages of evolution of each fragrance. Visit: **wohaparfums.es** and **@woha.parfums** on IG.

15. Discover **HOTEL, MIKE**. Their innovative body care line combines the power of biotechnology, fermentation and upcycling to deliver premium, eco-conscious products. Immerse yourself in their signature hand and body wash, featuring an invigorating blend of marine notes, fresh-cut grass, and spiced pepper. Follow with their body lotion, containing a calming fusion of earthy notes, warm bark and soft herbs. Explore their full range at **hotelmike.co.uk** and follow **@hotelmike_** on IG

16. Bovardi isn't just skincare—it's a statement. Precision-engineered, science-backed, and unapologetically masculine. Their formulations deliver unrivalled performance with cutting-edge ingredients that work as hard as you do. For men who set the standard. GQ Exclusive: Claim your FREE Bovardi sample kit. Use code GQSKIN at checkout (expires 18/05/25). Visit **bovardi.com** and follow on IG **@bovardimen**

17. Introducing **Verve**, the disruptive nutrition brand that is radically honest about health. The Verve range includes: V80 Daily Greens, Duo Eclipse, Naked Beauty and Verve Honest Mushroom (pictured). Optimise your everyday at **@vavaverve** and **vavaverve.com**

18. INQUE Fragrances is an artistic perfume house blending, bottling & labelling perfumes by hand. They craft scent stories and landscapes in a bottle. At INQUE Fragrances they believe Future Memories are a testament to the transportive power of scent. A conduit to both remembered journeys and imagined possibilities, each fragrance in their debut collection is a means of aromatic escapism. Visit their website at **inque.com.au** and follow **@inquefragrances** on IG.

19. Unleash the power of sophistication with **Classy Oud**—a luxurious fragrance that effortlessly blends freshness with depth, leaving a smoky, unforgettable trail. Crafted for the modern man who demands exclusivity, boldness, and refinement, Classy Oud is the ultimate signature scent, embodying timeless elegance and unparalleled confidence. Visit **shakurfragrances.co.uk** and follow on IG: **@shakurfragrances**

20. Revate Skin is the ultimate in anti-ageing for Men. Engineered with high concentrations of science backed natural ingredients, their products have provided visible results for 1000's of Men globally. Australian made and with hundreds of 5-Star reviews, unlock your skin's youthful potential with a routine proven to deliver. Follow them on IG **@revate.skin** and visit **revate.au** to learn more.

21. Experience the appearance of skin-smoothing with **Valuxxo**'s Regenesis B-Tox Infusion Bio. Powered by Argireline™, this formula targets expression lines, aiming to create visibly smoother, youthful skin. Valuxxo blends science with eco-conscious, organic ingredients, creating lasting results for smoother looking skin. Visit **valuxxo.com** and follow on IG: **@valuxxoofficial**

22. The **Klira** Special is an advanced, personalised formula that has been designed to help enhance skin longevity. Engineered in their London lab, your formula features up to 11 meticulously selected ingredients working in synergy. With pharmaceutical-grade ingredients, each formula is freshly crafted and delivered within 48 hours for peak efficacy. Experience cutting-edge skin science, delivered to your door monthly. Visit **klira.skin** and follow on IG: **@kliraworld**

23. Aftershave Fluid V+A by **Ecomaat** is an exceptional product that blends luxury with sustainability. This is 100% natural, free from alcohol and synthetic ingredients. Enriched with vetiver and exotic aromas, it delivers soothing post-shave relief. The innovative formula features CO2 extracts of patchouli, black pepper, ginger, and vetiver, along with essential oils of Geranium and Bulgarian Rose, delivering a hydraring experience and sensual fragrance. Visit **ecomaat.eu** and follow on IG: **@ecomaat.eu**

24. Normal Mencare is natural skincare with highly effective formulas, tailored for men's skin. The Barcelona based brand redefines self-care with their 2-step routine Cleanser & Moisturiser, an ode to simplicity, functionality and design. The plant-based ingredients of their Essential Set include Hyaluronic Acid, Retinol, and Niacinamide. Signature fragrance with Essential Oils. Visit **normalmencare.com** and IG: **@normal.mencare**

25. FORT Men's Skincare – The Daily Duo for ultimate freshness. Upgrade your grooming with Fort's 5-star rated set featuring their Anti-Fatigue Moisturiser and Exfoliating Scrub. The products are designed to make your skin feel energised, refreshed, and hydrated with premium, results-driven formulas. Look sharp, feel unstoppable. Discounted monthly subscription available. Visit **fort-men.co.uk** and follow on IG **@fortmenscare**

26. Master the Nordic Hygge ritual with **rès növa** skincare, engineered for the modern man. Clean, organic, vegan. Experience the precision of botanicals, crafted to revitalise. Beyond skin deep; a moment of mindful restoration. One tree planted with every purchase. Discover the art of refined self-care. Visit **resnova.online** and use code GQ2025 for 15% off (expires 09/06/25). Follow **@resnova.online** on IG.

27. TwentyTwo. Pure and proven. Their Lion's Mane Mushroom Capsules are crafted with a single ingredient: 100% U.K. grown Lion's Mane Fruiting Body – No bulkers, no fillers. They are UK-grown and organic, grown in-house for complete control. No additives. No shortcuts. Just clean, effective supplementation. Explore more at **mytwentytwo.co.uk** and **mytwentytwo_** on IG.

28. COSMO presents the ultimate in beard care. From hydrating moisturisers to luxurious oils, serums, and balms, their range is designed to condition, soften, and enhance the appearance of your beard's natural shine. Infused with premium essential oils, it's grooming made effortless. Explore the collection at **cosmocosmetics.ae** and follow on IG: **@cosmocosmeticsuae**

29. Jacovèus Botanicals is a gender-neutral, sustainable brand, blending nature and innovation for high-performance haircare. They use botanical ingredients like Marula, Shea Butter, and Bergamot. Designed for versatility and creativity, they aim to enhance the appearance of natural textures, delivering professional-quality results with a commitment to healthy hair and environmental responsibility. Use code GQ15 for 15% discount (expires 09/06/25). Visit **jacoveusbotanicals.com** and follow on IG: **@jacoveusbotanicals**

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HOTEL MIKE
HOTEL MIKE

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REVATE
REVATE

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KLIRA
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ECOMAAT
V+A
Soothing aftershave fluid

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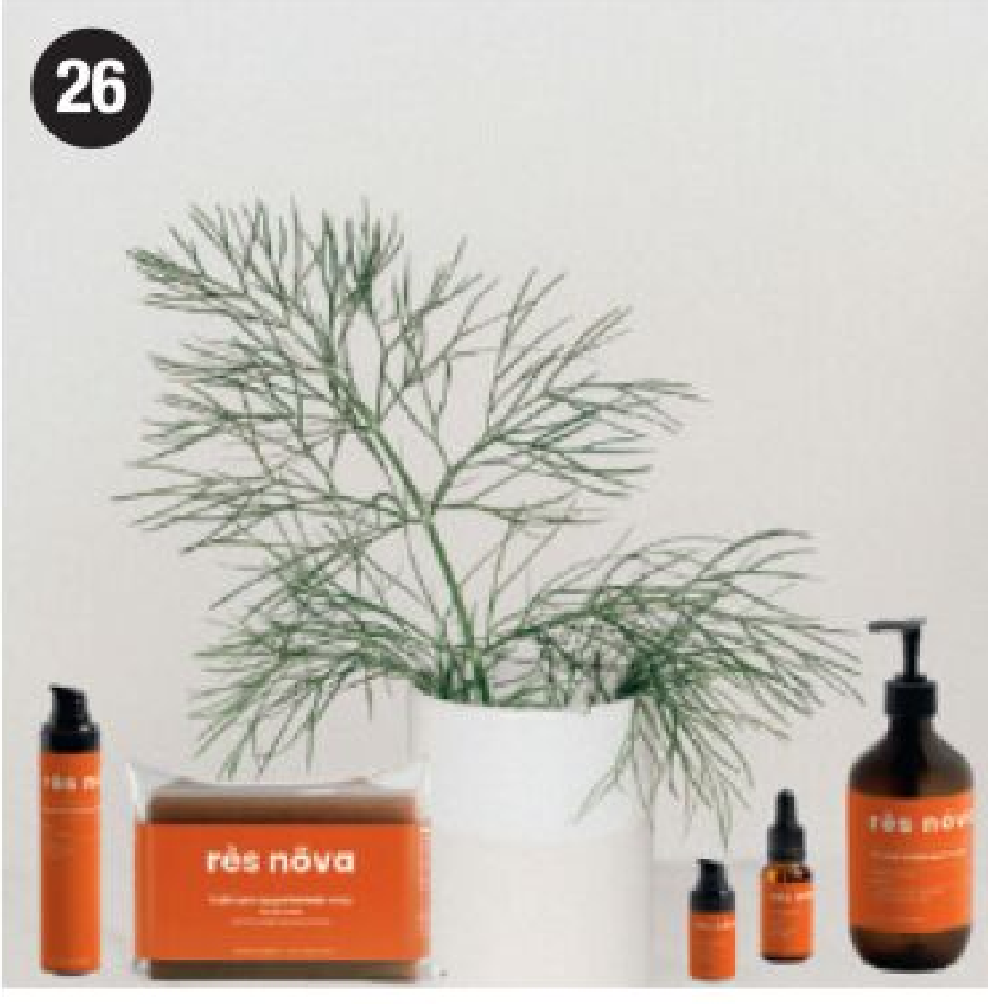

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Twenty Two
Supplement
Organic Lion's Mane
Function
Memory, focus, mood regulation
Composition
Pure fruiting body
Origin
United Kingdom
60 Capsules

28

COSMO MEN
BEARD & HAIR OIL
COSMO MEN
BEARD MOISTURIZER
COSMO MEN
BEARD SERUM
COSMO MEN
BEARD BALM

29

Jacovèus
Jacovèus
Jacovèus

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Cutting Edge

30

31

IMEAN
IMEAN

30. Dominus Pomade redefines grooming with handcrafted, plant-based formulated pomades. Featuring vast selections from clay, gel, hybrid, and cream pomades, with better ingredients with actual results. Embrace your right to have confidence in your grooming journey. Reclaim your ability to achieve maximum styling output! Visit **dominuspomade.com** and **@dominuspomade** on IG.

31. 'I mean every word, every choice, and every ingredient'. After 27 years of dedicated skincare, Sarah is thrilled to introduce **IMEAN**, which brings authentic, simple, and impactful skincare. Their creations, infused with German peptide, are designed to bring balance, rejuvenation, and high-performance results. Visit: **imeanbeauty.com** and **@imeanbeauty** on IG.

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AMPLE
SERUM 001

32. Ultimate Grooming products set the standard in the male grooming and barbering industry, combining premium quality with refreshing scents that leave you feeling revitalised and confident. Crafted for superior performance, each product delivers exceptional results, ensuring a polished look and a rejuvenating experience that elevates everyday grooming to an art form. Visit: **ultimategrooming.co.uk** and **@ultimategroomingbarbershop** on IG.

33. VRAIKO's Lily Neck & Face Massager is an ideal starter tool for daily skin care. Elegant, budget-friendly, and well-crafted, it's perfect for those new to beauty massagers, offering a simple yet luxurious addition to your skincare regimen. Visit: **vraikobeauty.com** and **@vraiko_official** on IG

34. Ample Cosmetics responsibly crafts gender-neutral skincare with a minimalist design and modern functionality. Its multifunctional serum, featuring calming and reparative properties, is perfect for hydration, recovery, and aftershave care. Discover effortless radiance at **feelample.kz** or follow **@ample.cosmetics** on IG. Minimalist care, Ample impact.

35

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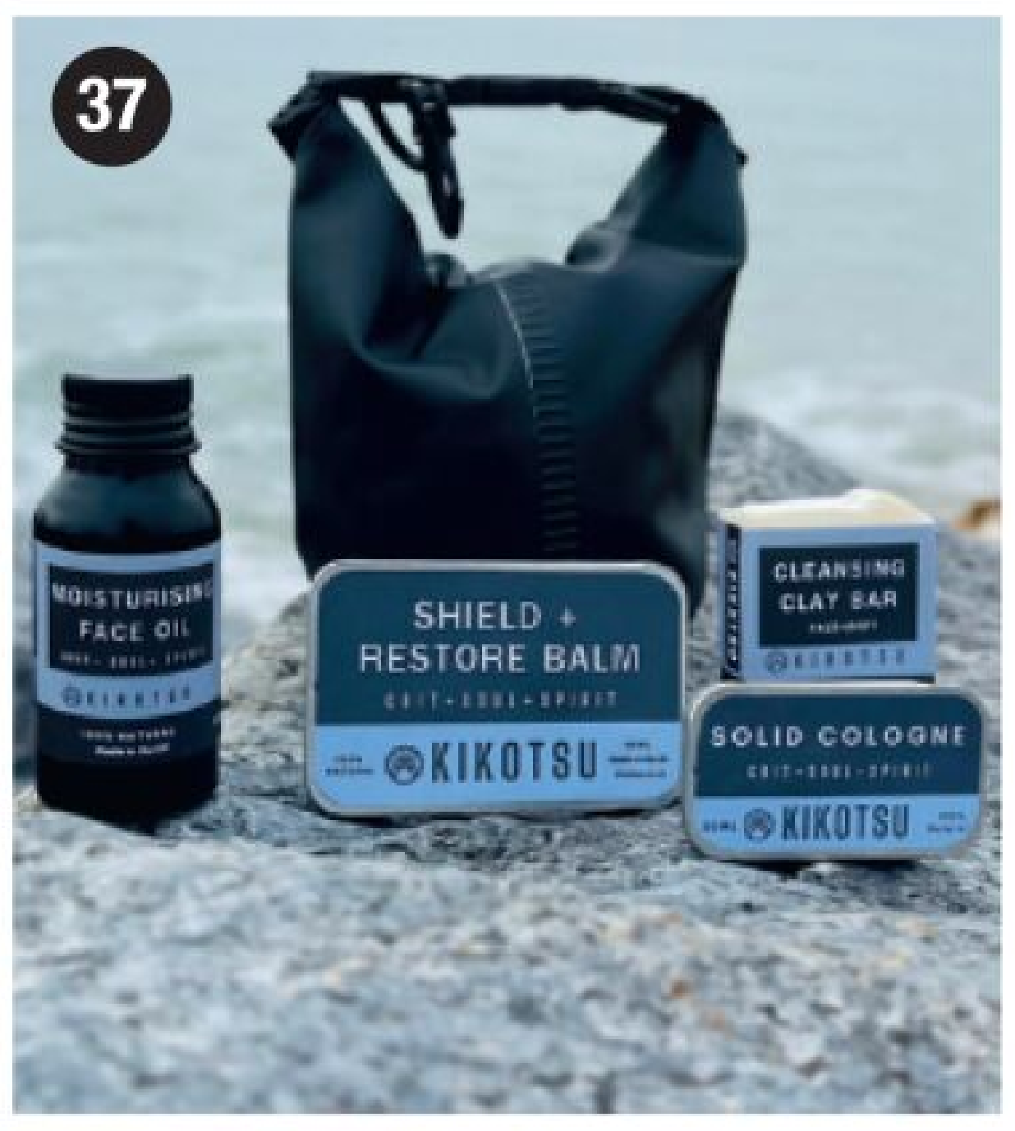


38

OUDOLOGY
LONDON
Sacred Oud
Face Oil

35. FRASSAÏ's latest fragrance Ajedrez (chess), plays with the notion of time and space. Chess masters enter into deep concentration, reaching an almost meditative state. FRASSAÏ captures this idea of slowed time in a perfume with notes of iris, lavender, spices and amber woods. Available on **Frassai.com** and follow **@frassai** on IG.

36. Make an impression with this sleek 30ml bottle of Matakatia Bay eau de parfum. Hand poured by New Zealand fragrance house **Miller Road Fragrances**. A fresh yet warm fragrance that captures the serenity of the ocean. Vibrant fruity top notes and a sensual base offer a tranquil escape in every spritz. Visit **millerroad.co.nz** and follow **@millerroadfragrances** on IG.

39

PERFAME
EAU DE PARFUM
ÉLIXIR 10

40

37. Kikotsu, skincare for wild adventurers with Grit, Soul & Spirit. 100% natural cold pressed oil products blended with scents of rugged forests, smoky fires with citrus undertones. Everything to cleanse, hydrate & smell great. A cleansing face & body bar, moisturising face oil, shield and protect balm & solid cologne supplied in a tough dry bag ready to take on all your adventures. Visit **Kikotsu.co.uk** and follow **@eleganthippie.co.uk** on IG.

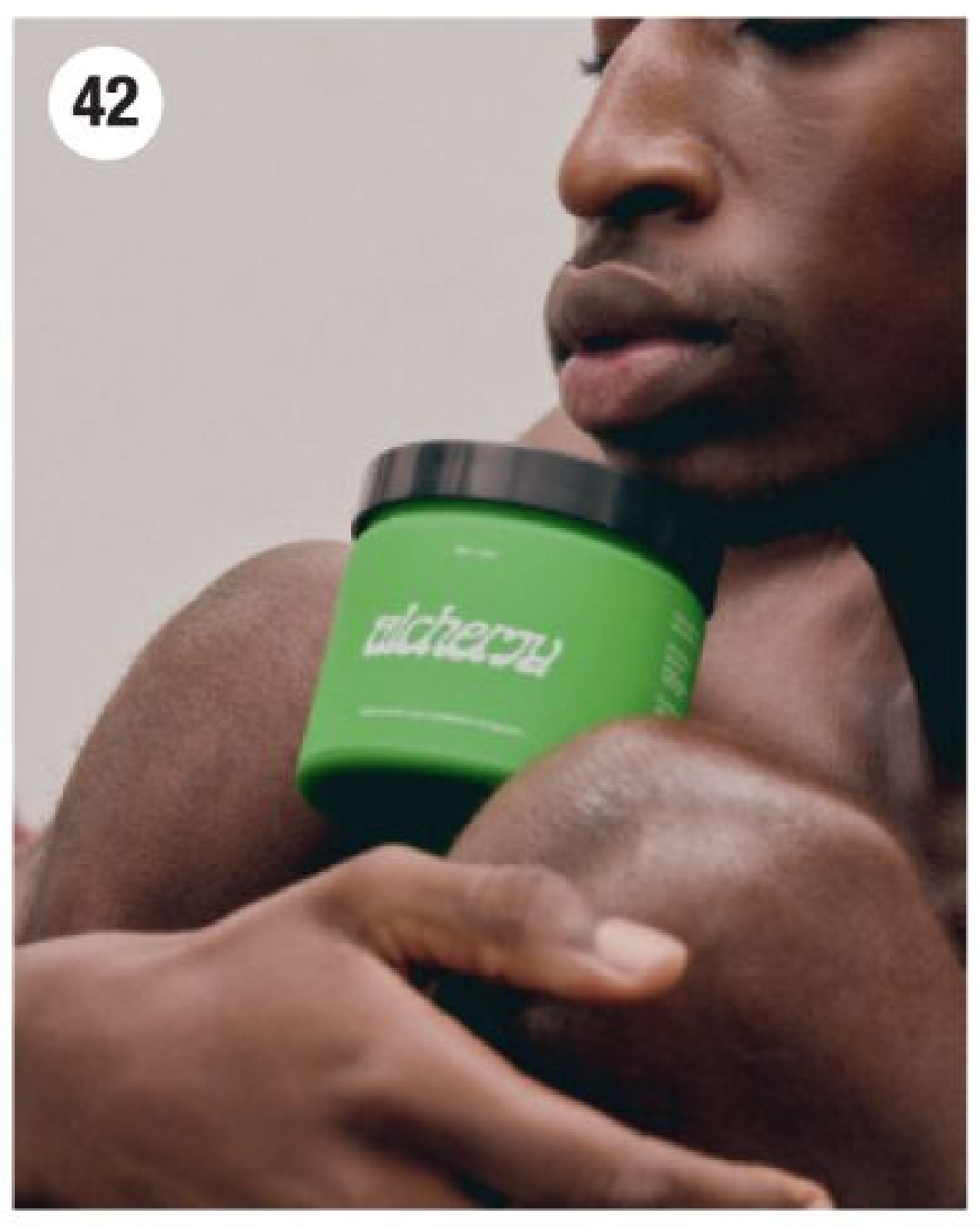
38. Oudology London presents the Sacred Oud Face Oil, a groundbreaking pure Oud-infused skincare product for glowing, healthy looking skin. The products is designed to elevate your skincare ritual to new heights of luxury. Experience the power of pure Oud, redefining modern skincare. Visit **oudologylondon.com** and follow **@oudologylondon** IG.

39. PERFAME redefines luxury with affordable, niche quality fragrances designed for lasting impact. Elixir No. 10, inspired by popular luxury fragrance, combines vibrant pineapple, birch, and ambergris for a bold, sophisticated scent that radiates confidence. With 30% oil concentration, it delivers impressive longevity and the elegance of fine perfumery at an accessible price. $49 or any 3 perfumes for $99. Visit: **perfame.com** and **@pefame** on IG.

41

Venneir
Professional Toothpaste for Cosmetic Smiles

42



43

OAT SOAK
FEED YOUR SKIN

40. Glowing skin is a science—not a sale. **Monderma** aims to deliver premium, dermatological-grade skincare, expertly formulated with the intent to clear the appearance of acne, fine lines, hyperpigmentation, and rosacea. Using up to 3 micronised active ingredients, their high-efficacy vegan formulas are designed to deliver visible results. Cruelty, fragrance, and alcohol free. Backed by science, designed for you. Maximise your skincare with Monderma today. Visit: **monderma.co.uk** and **@mondermahq** on IG.

41. Your smile is your signature—make it flawless. **Venneir**'s advanced formula removes stains, protects dental work, and keeps your teeth looking flawless. Designed for veneers, crowns, implants, and composite bonding, yet just as powerful on natural teeth. No harsh ingredients—just a cleaner, brighter smile every day. Discover more at **venneir.com** and follow **@venneir** on Instagram.

42. Alchemy believes true health starts from within. Born from a journey of harnessing natural ingredients to address common health concerns, their hero supplement, Skin + Gut, aims to optimise the feeling of digestion and overall wellness. This tonic supports the appearance of clear, healthy skin and the feeling of a balanced gut, promoting vitality from the inside out. Visit **alchemyofficial.com** and follow **@alchemyofficial__** on IG.

43. Say goodbye to itchy, irritated skin with **OatSoak** - the natural solution for men battling Eczema, Psoriasis, or itchy irritated skin. Packed with pure oat goodness, it is designed to calm and soothe the feeling of your skin, aiming to restore without harsh chemicals. Made in Wales by Lucy and Katie. Visit **OatSoakUk.com** and follow **@oatsoakuk** on IG.

GQ's Hamper

1. Ranger Chocolate Co. teams up with Kann Restaurant for a bar inspired by founder George Domurot's Puerto Rican and Chef Gregory Gourdet's Haitian roots. Infused with bold Caribbean flavors, it's a tribute to heritage and craftsmanship. Every bar sold supports ethical cacao farming in Haiti. Shop **rangerchocolate.co** & follow **@rangerchocolateco** on IG.

2. Upgrade your drinks game with **Wavey Ice**, creators of boldly stylish alcoholic ice pops and impeccably crafted ready-to-drink cocktails. Designed for those who appreciate quality as much as aesthetics, each innovative flavour effortlessly blends sophistication with a spirited edge. Whether hosting or unwinding, redefine your next occasion. Explore the collection at **waveyice.com**

3. Discover seed oil-free crisps! **Talloes** crisps are made with just three premium ingredients: potatoes, chicken tallow, and sea salt. No seed oils, no additives—just bold flavour and serious crunch. Elevate your snacking game with a crisp that's as refined as your taste. Indulgence, without compromise. Visit: **talloes.co.uk** and **@talloescrisps** on IG

4. A Pleasure Break - **ËMBËL** Chocolates is all about savouring the moment. Each bonbon is a taste of indulgence, crafted for those who appreciate life's little luxuries. With The Bël Club, they take it further - curating intimate gatherings where food, drinks, and conversation flow effortlessly. Take a bite, take a break. Visit **embelchocolates.com** and follow on IG: **@embelchocolates** Photography by Issy Clarke.

5. No additives. No sugars. Nothing like the tequila you've had before. **Tico Tequila**'s three expressions are sweet by design and completely pure. Made to be sipped on ice or shaken into your favourite cocktails, this new brand really opened our eyes to what tequila can taste like. Sign up to their subscription for prices as low as £32 a bottle at **ticotequila.com** and visit **@tico.tequila** on IG.

6. Store-bought tortillas don't compare. **MASA Tortillas** are made the traditional way—using nixtamalised corn for a richer flavour, softer texture, and better flexibility. No preservatives, no shortcuts, just three simple ingredients and the taste of real Mexican tradition. Stock up or subscribe for fresh deliveries, and don't forget their signature hot sauces for the perfect pairing. Order now at **masa-tortillas.co.uk** and follow **@masatortillasuk** on IG.

7. Ezpresso's liquid coffee offers endless possibilities for hot brews, cold brews, and of course, cocktails. With a Great Taste Award and World Coffee Innovations Best Cold Brew 2024, their premium arabica concentrate is super smooth, additive and preservative-free, making it the perfect option for espresso martinis and other coffee creations. Visit **ezpresso.com** and follow **@ezpressocoffee** on IG.

8. THIS IS SKINNY understand that drinking alcohol may go against your health or fitness goals. Life can still be a party, THIS IS SKINNY has a range of lower-calorie cocktails, being only 65 calories or below per can, with no added sugars. All made with no artificial colours, no preservatives, vegan, gluten free and almost zero carbs. The Mojito with a twist of Rhubarb is perfect as you get ready for summer! Visit **thisisskinny.co.uk** and **@thisisskinny_cocktails** on IG.

9. Bringing bold Argentine flavour to the modern table, **Paisanita** is redefining chimichurri with a rustic, family-crafted recipe. Made with premium dried ingredients and natural preservatives, this vibrant red sauce is perfect for grilling, dipping, and drizzling. Authentic yet versatile, it's chimichurri, reimagined—a true taste of the Pampas, bottled. Visit **paisanita.com** and follow **@paisanita.sauce** on IG.

10. All Kick, No Hangover. **Prano** is a bold, all-natural, non-alcoholic ginger-based aperitif that's as smooth as it is fiery. Often likened to a gingered limoncello, it is crafted with raw ginger, toasted cardamom, fresh mint, and sweet jaggery - no artificial flavours, no preservatives, just pure, authentic taste. Enjoy it neat over ice, or pair it with tonic or soda for a refreshing twist. ABV: 0%. Discover more at **pranodrinks.com** and **@pranodrinks** on IG.

11. DEEP Almond Butter is made completely by hand using luxurious Marcona almonds and Ferragnes almonds, roasted to perfection to create a flavour and aroma that's deep, rich and complex. Always small batch. No added oil, salt, or sugar. This is almond butter as it was meant to be. Shop online at **deepalmondbutter.com** and follow **@deepalmondbutter** on IG.

12. Bombayish brings you refined, authentic and inventive home style Indian street food. Their chef founder takes the street food dishes of his home city, and puts his own twist on them, with a change of flavour, or serving idea. Always ensuring their dishes are fresh and homemade, providing absolute authenticity. Visit **bombayish.co.uk** and follow on IG: **@bombayish_uk**

13. Stock up your fridge with organic and biodynamic wines from **Hands Off Wines**, a unique collaboration of three founding partners who share an intense passion for great wine and great art. Partnering with top European wineries, they offer a diverse range of biodynamic wines; from crisp whites and rosés to bold reds and sparkling varieties, each is made from classic, organic grape varietals. Discover your favourites at **handsoffwines.com** and follow **@handsoffwines** on IG.

14. Discover **V Spiced Rum**, the latest creation from the sustainable British rum brand V Rum. Distilling from Hampshire, V Rum is sustainably crafted and universally adored. Alongside the ultra-smooth Premium and Overproof Rum, their sumptuously golden V Spiced is crafted with delightfully sweet vanilla and smoky pineapple. Explore the world of V at **vrum.co.uk** and **@vrumofficial** on IG.

15. Egmont Honey curates this rare, authentic Mānuka Honey, harvested from the remote forests of New Zealand. This rich, creamy caramel Mānuka Honey is packed with unique antibacterial properties so it is the perfect staple in your pantry all year round. Shop now at **egmonthoney.co.uk** and follow on IG: **@egmont_honey_uk**

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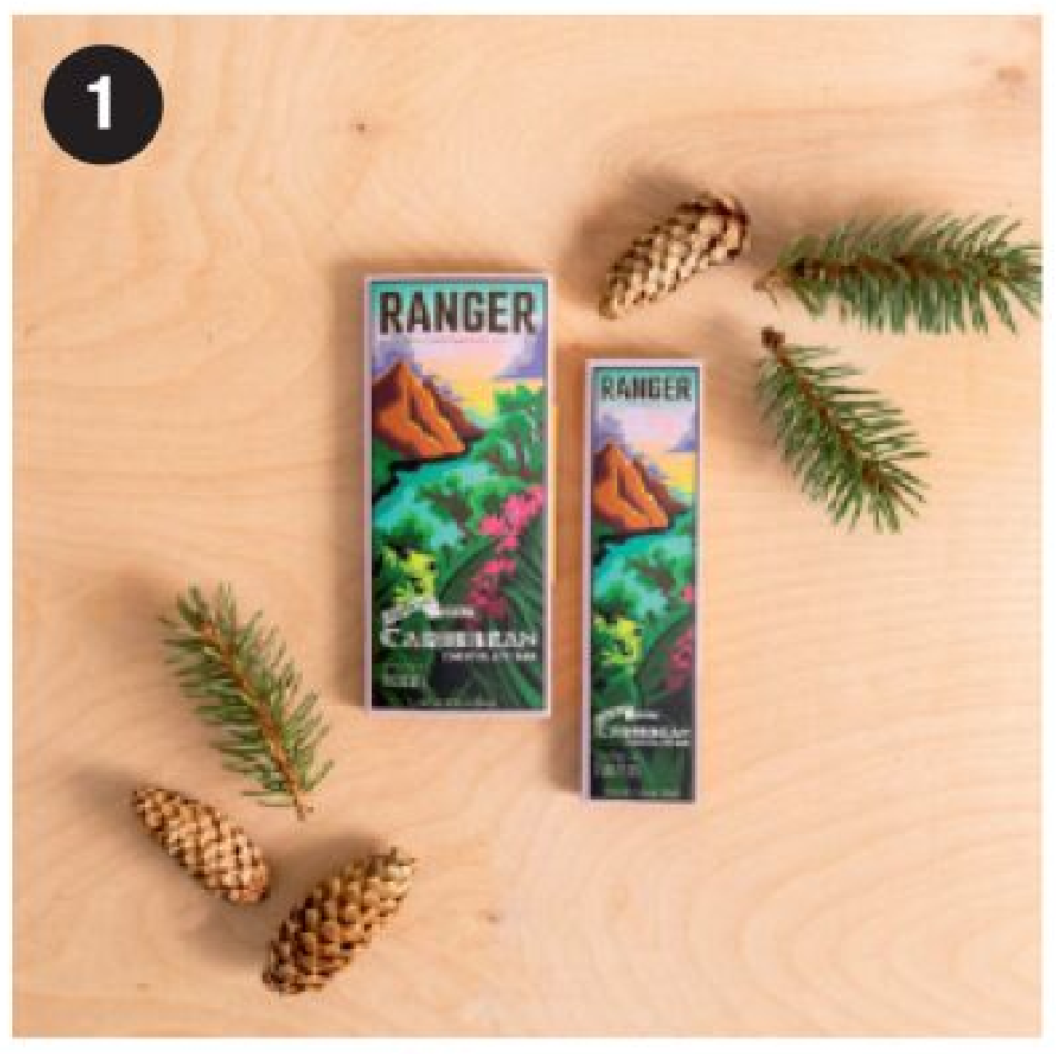

2

SIPS
VARIETY COCKTAIL BOX

3

CHICKEN FAT POTATO CRISPS
TALLOES
SEA SALT
0g SEED OILS

4

5

6

masa
TORTILLAS

7

8

THIS IS
SKINNY.
MOJITO
RHUBARB

9

10

PRANO
NON-ALCOHOLIC GINGER

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DEEP
TOASTED ALMOND BUTTER

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V
SPICED RUM

15

EGMONT
Mānuka Honey
250+ MGO
VITALITY

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HOME ON THE GREEN

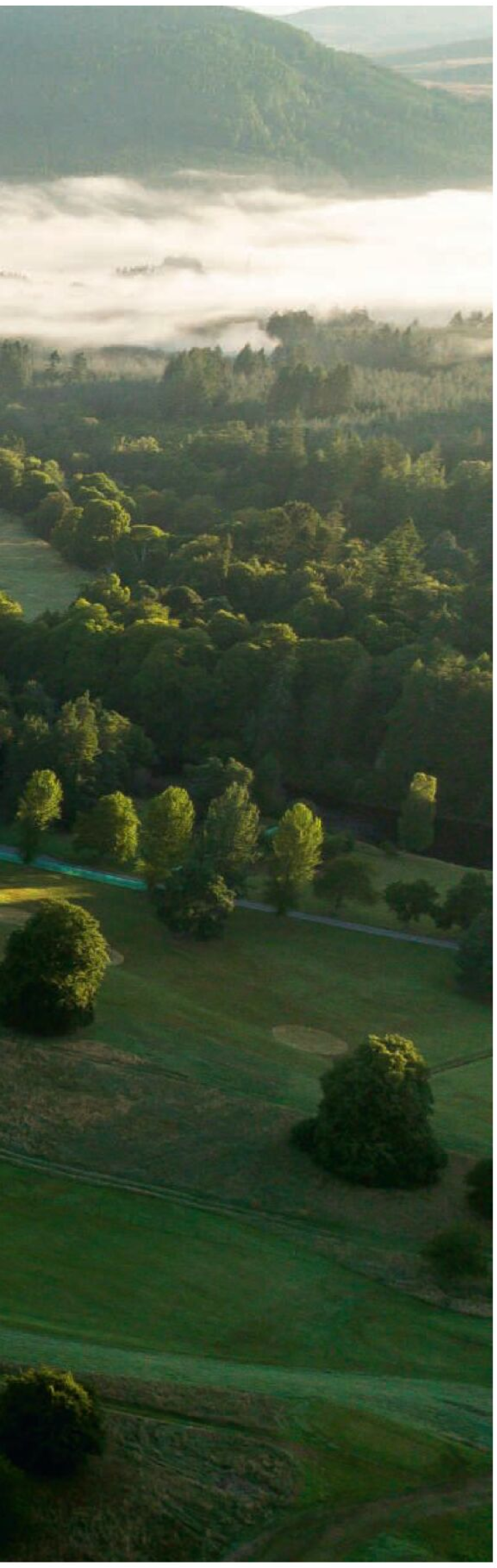
Properties beside golf courses are perennially popular, and not just for their proximity to the fairway. Discover some of the world's best homes, from Scotland to the Bahamas

TAYMOUTH CASTLE GOLF AND SPORT CLUB, UK
Scotland is known as the home of golf and this remarkable resort by Discovery Land Company celebrates this, with a historic course from the 1920s reimagined and redesigned to modern championship standard. There will be 145 properties available – a custom site starts at £4 million.
taymouthcastleclub.com

Homes come in all shapes and sizes, but among the most enduringly popular varieties are those that are in close proximity to golf courses. There's the obvious appeal of the sport itself – if you're a keen golfer (or the partner of one), you will be well aware of the irresistible attraction of a top-notch course – but there's a host of other, less obvious benefits too, even for those who have absolutely no interest in picking up a set of clubs.

Golf courses tend to be found in beautiful locations, and are associated with vast open spaces. A standard 18-hole course usually requires at least 100 acres of land, while a championship course will start at about 150 acres. These are minimum sizes – most serious courses are far larger, so they offer huge expanses of greenery to admire and enjoy. Not all landscapes are created equal, and golf courses require undulating terrain, with the natural contours of the site carefully tweaked and altered by a course designer to create interest and challenges for the players, while enhancing the natural beauty of the site. This usually has the happy side-effect of providing the neighbouring properties with some excellent views – so it's no surprise that houses that overlook golf courses command a premium, even if you might end up with the odd renegade golf ball flying into your

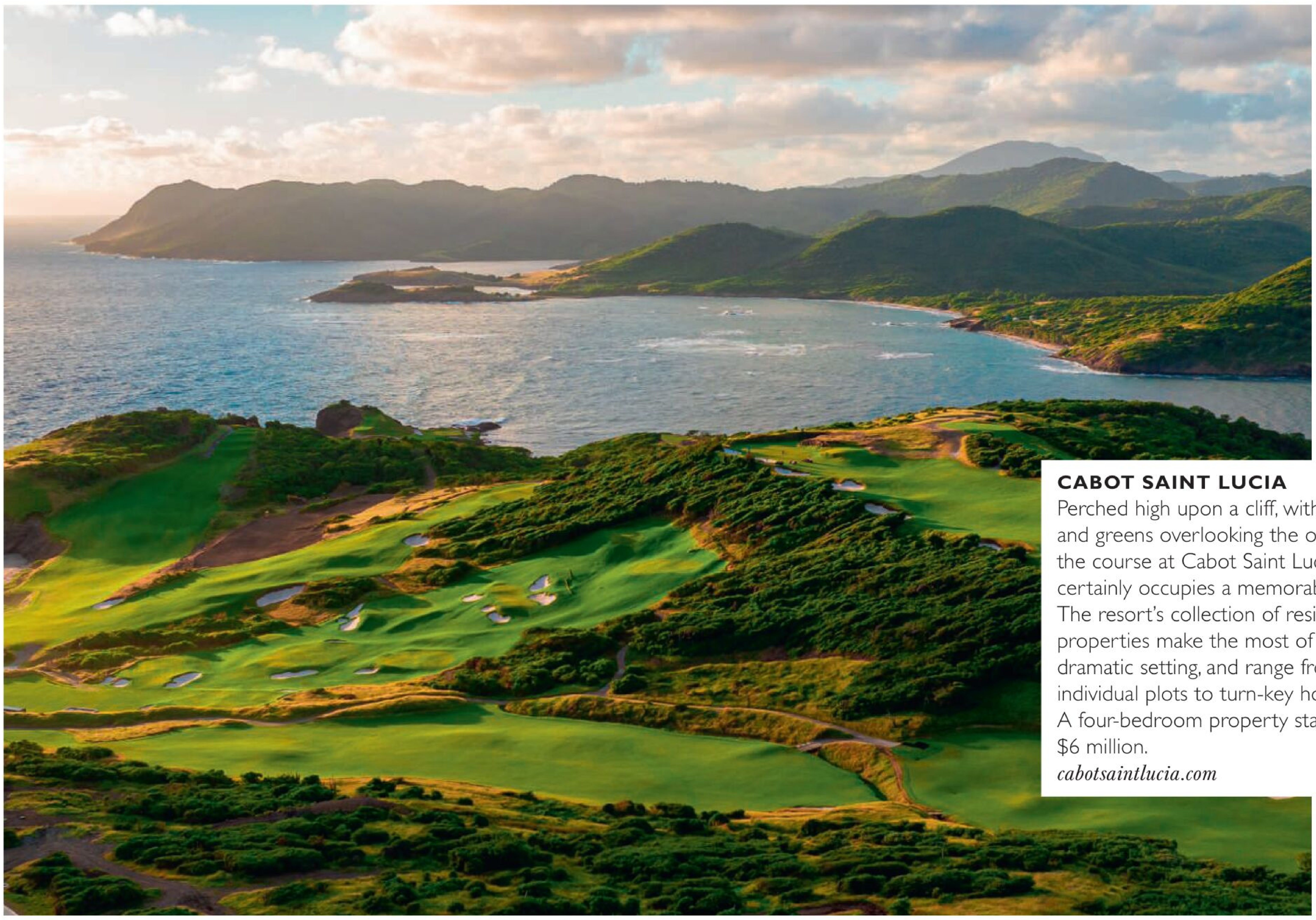
QUEENSGATE HOUSE, WENTWORTH ESTATE, UK
Occupying one of the best locations within Surrey's famous Wentworth Estate, Queensgate House is a Georgian-style property that dates from 2004, set in two acres and with an indoor pool. The property backs on to the Wentworth Golf Club, with its three 18-hole courses. £12.95 million.
bartonwyatt.co.uk



VILLA NOON, SOTOGRANDE, SPAIN
This eco-friendly property is located in Andalucía's famous Sotogrande resort, which is one of the main sports destinations in Europe with its four championship golf courses. The contemporary villa is entirely self-sufficient in terms of water and energy, setting a new benchmark in terms of luxury design. POA.
sotogrande.com

NORTH GROVE, QUINTA DO LAGO, PORTUGAL
As one of the top resorts in the Algarve, Quinta do Lago is famed for its golf, and the development at North Grove is a fantastic opportunity for buyers to create their fantasy home. The 13 plots look out across the north course and offer panoramic mountain views. From €3,513,250.
quintadolago.com

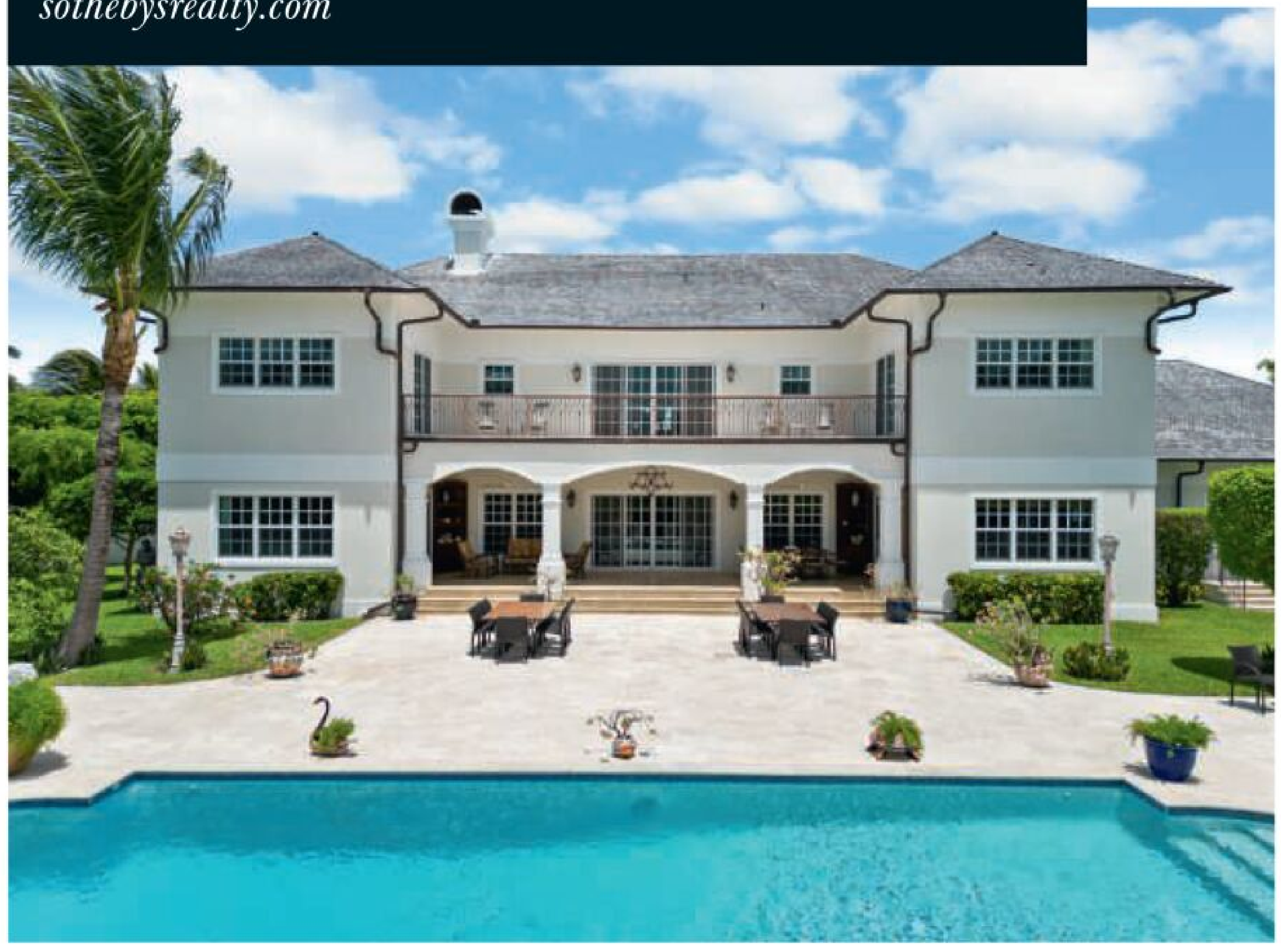
FAIRWAY HOMES, CABOT CITRUS FARMS, USA
Located on Florida's Nature Coast, Cabot Citrus Farms spans 1,200 acres of spectacular countryside, with multiple golf courses and a new clubhouse. The Fairway Homes are inspired by traditional Southern architecture, with porches from which to survey the breathtaking scenery. From $1,675,000.
cabotcitrusfarms.com



Photograph: Michael Marcellin

CABOT SAINT LUCIA
Perched high upon a cliff, with fairways and greens overlooking the ocean, the course at Cabot Saint Lucia certainly occupies a memorable spot. The resort's collection of residential properties make the most of the dramatic setting, and range from individual plots to turn-key homes. A four-bedroom property starts at $6 million.
cabotsaintlucia.com

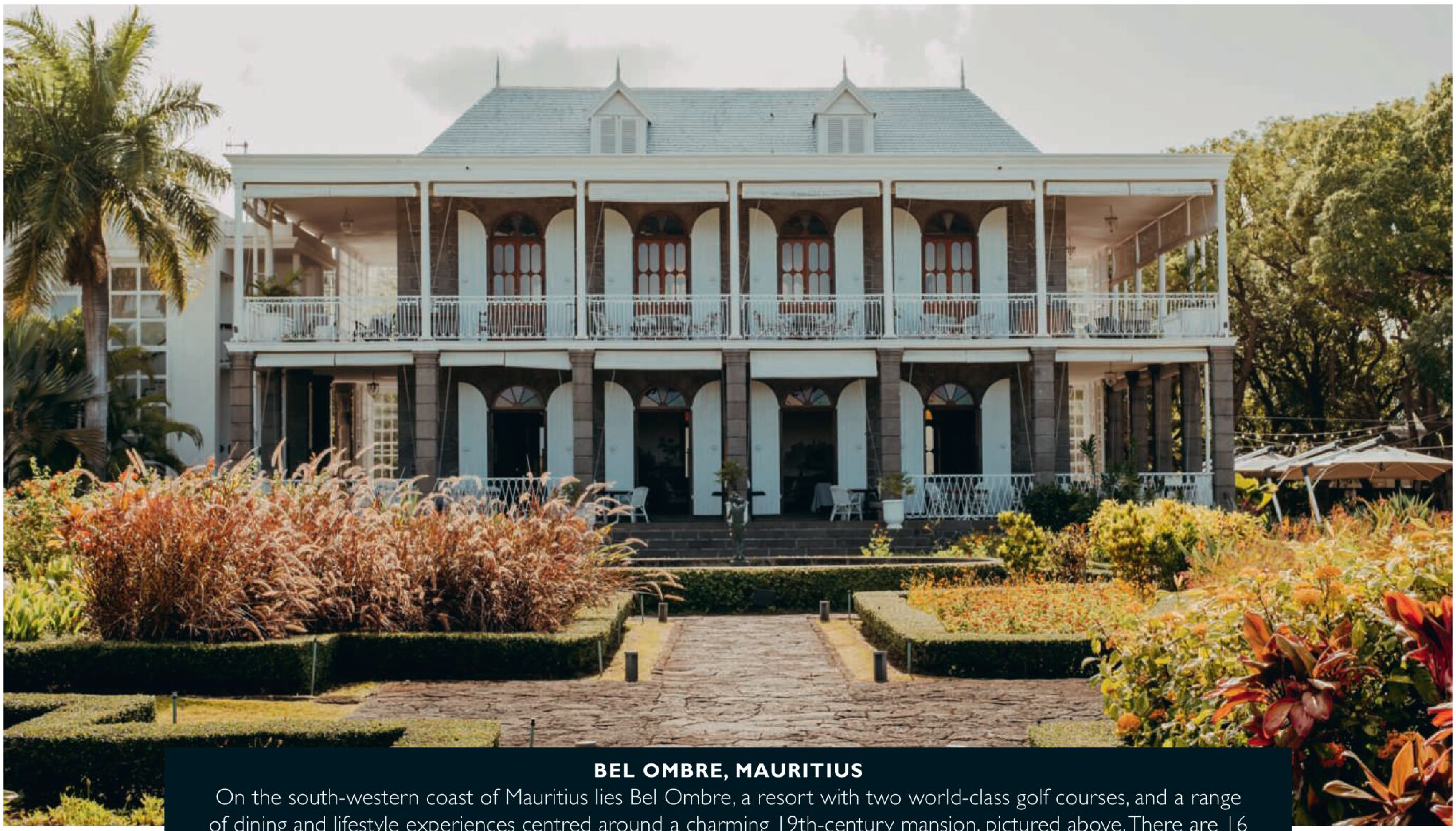
57 OCEAN CLUB ESTATES, BAHAMAS
This 11,000-square-foot property on Paradise Island is conveniently situated on the 11th fairway of the famous Ocean Club golf course. There are four en-suite bedrooms, an enormous wine cellar, a pool and a separate one-bedroom apartment. $5,495,000.
sothebysrealty.com



COSTA NAVARINO, GREECE
Located in the Peloponnese region of southern Greece, Costa Navarino is one of Europe's top golf destinations, with four 18-hole courses designed to challenge even the most experienced players. Available properties range from two-bedroom villas to custom-built designs, and residents can avail of everything the resort has to offer. From €1.5 million.
costanavarino.com

garden. Because courses tend to be found in affluent rural locations, the surrounding homes are typically larger and more spaced out, making them particularly desirable in terms of space and privacy.

Golf courses are often a feature of the smartest resorts, so buying a property in one of these locations usually means that there's a fantastic array of amenities on the doorstep. At Taymouth Castle Golf and Sport Club in the Scottish Highlands, for example, there's a state-of-the-art fitness centre, a spa, tennis and pickleball courts, an equestrian club and an abundance of dining options in the atmospheric surrounds of the 19th-century, gothic-revival castle. In Andalucía, Sotogrande has everything from polo to a beach club available to residents – there's even an international school for families who want to base themselves there year-round. Meanwhile,



BEL OMBRE, MAURITIUS

On the south-western coast of Mauritius lies Bel Ombre, a resort with two world-class golf courses, and a range of dining and lifestyle experiences centred around a charming 19th-century mansion, pictured above. There are 16 serviced plots currently available on the resort, giving buyers the opportunity to design their own property in this tropical paradise. From $375,000.

Diane Watkins Property Consult: propertyconsult.mu

BLANCA GARDENS II, SOMABAY, EGYPT

Occupying a prime spot on the edge of Somabay's championship golf course, Blanca Gardens II is a new collection of residences with fantastic views across the greens. It's within easy walking distance of the beach and marina, and residents can make the most of the resort's many amenities. From $150,000.

somabay.com

THE ST REGIS RESIDENCES CASARES, FINCA CORTESIN, SPAIN

This new development is in the heart of the beautiful Finca Cortesin resort in Andalucía – built on one of the highest points of the estate, the 46 standalone properties look out across the coastline and the exceptional golf course. There's a 24-hour concierge, a residents' club and a spa. From €2.39 million.

savills.com

Costa Navarino in Greece is not only famous for golf, with four 18-hole courses to explore, but also now has a new Mandarin Oriental hotel to complement the existing array of five-star hotels and facilities. These include a vibrant waterfront marketplace with shops, restaurants, entertainment venues and an open-air cinema.

Golfing properties also tend to make good investments – they typically have a strong resale value, both for their prime locations and for their lifestyle benefits. Even if you've never played a round of golf in your life, it's worth exploring this niche category of homes – at the very least, you'll discover some spectacularly beautiful locations around the world. And you never know, you might end up falling in love with the game itself – and as many a golfer will attest, once you get into the swing of it, a life-long addiction is par for the course.

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Jade Wharf, the latest collection of apartments at London Dock, offers stunning views over the capital

AN ABSOLUTE GEM

Jade Wharf at London Dock offers beautiful new homes alongside the exceptional Mauretania Lounge, a private amenities space setting new standards of luxury

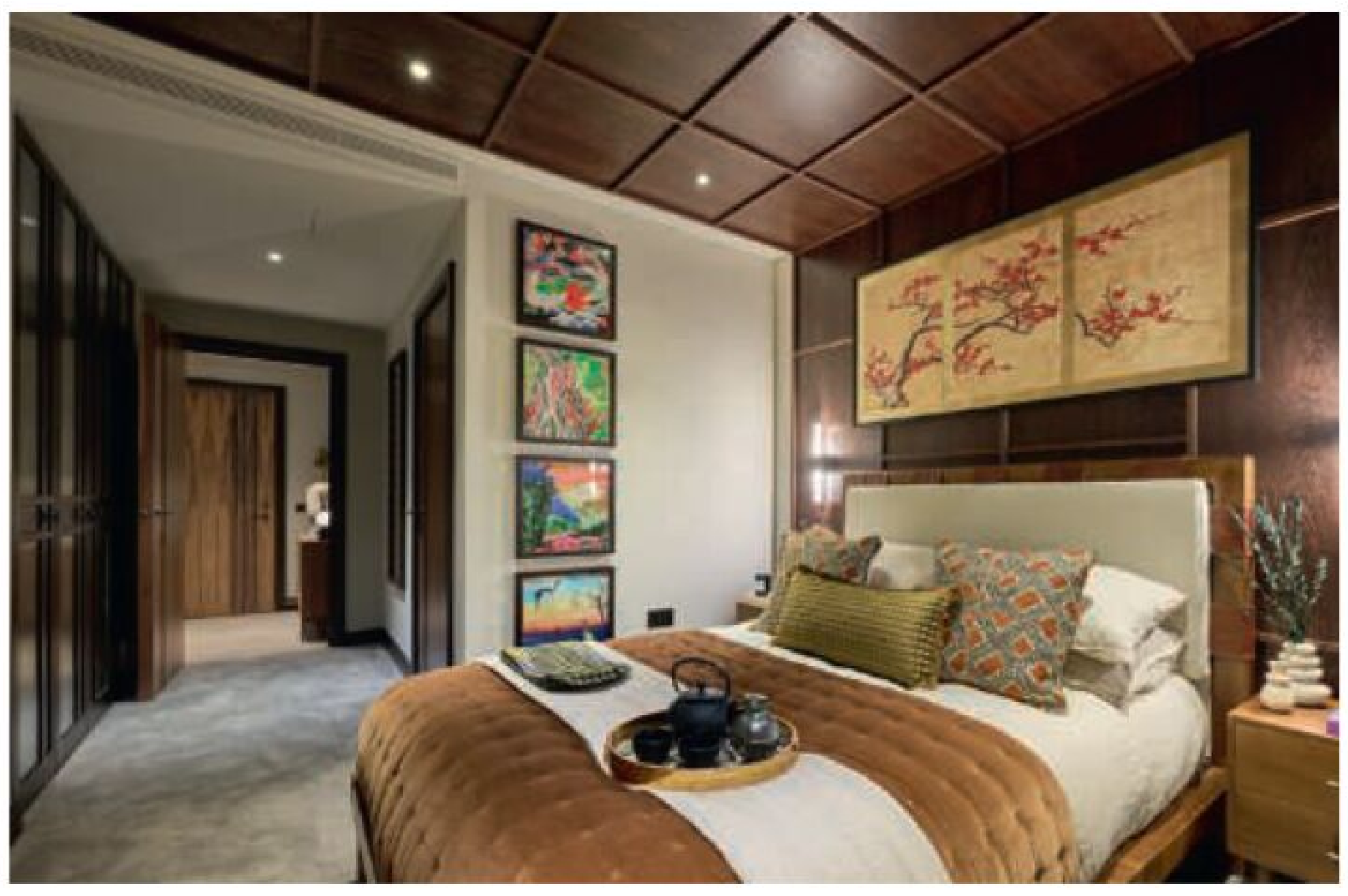
A collection of desirable new homes has been unveiled in Jade Wharf at London Dock. London Dock by St George is a dynamic 15-acre neighbourhood, set among landscaped open space in the heart of Wapping, that has become a prized location for city living. Located on land that once bustled with the trade of luxury imports, Jade Wharf comprises a selection of impressive Manhattan studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments available to purchase off-plan.

Jade Wharf is named after the gemstone that represents prosperity and good fortune. Lucky indeed will be future residents of these open-plan apartments, designed with top-quality materials for a relaxed contemporary lifestyle. Spacious kitchens come in three palettes and offer stone-effect waterfall counters, fluted glass cabinets and oak or walnut herringbone flooring. Buy into the premium Curators Collection and benefit from state-of-the-art technology such as app-controlled security, smart lighting and music. Bathrooms are bespoke sanctuaries with freestanding marble basins, reeded timber panelling and stone underfoot.

Floor-to-ceiling windows showcase Jade Wharf's stellar location – a stone's throw from Zone 1 transport links – with sweeping views of the City to the west, Tower Bridge to the south and Canary Wharf in the east. Many apartments feature dual-aspect wrap-around balconies and views over London from their private outdoor space.

A sensational new boon for London Dock residents is the luxurious Mauretania Lounge: imagine the grandeur of Victorian glasshouses combined with the iconic style of the Orient Express and a luxury ocean liner. Serving as an extended entertaining space to enjoy with family, friends and neighbours, and a workspace for those working 'from home', it resonates with the glamour of The Gilded Age of Travel. A double-height floor-to-ceiling aquarium sets the scene, which includes the Captain's Quarters private dining room, a relaxing Palm Room and Observation Lounge.

These exclusive new spaces sit alongside London Dock's existing hotel-style facilities that include a swimming pool, Jacuzzi, gym, sauna and steam room, virtual golf, squash court and private cinema. Luxury apartments and a lifestyle to match: what's not to love about the opportunity to buy at London Dock? *For more information, please call 020 3608 3620; email sales@londondock.co.uk or visit londondock.co.uk*



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HAVE MY MUM AS YOUR NEIGHBOUR!

There are many great reasons to come and live in this stunning flat on Eton Avenue, but the fact that my mum lives two doors away has to be the top one.

There's no doubt that I am biased. In reality, many of you will love the fact that it is part of a distinguished brick building with Swiss architectural details that make it unique on the street, or prefer the amazing common parts with large round arches that impress when you come through the front door.

You may love the stunning lead glass windows that flood the space with natural light throughout the day, or place a high value on having magnificent flow between the two large entertaining rooms, each with its own fireplace and high ceilings, more than having my mum as your neighbour.

Some deluded people will think that having a spacious three bedroom apartment 800 metres from Primrose Hill is better than having her close by, but that's because you haven't met her yet.

The area offers excellent schools, including Trevor Roberts, The Hall, Hereward House (my old school), and Sarum Hall, all within 300 metres. Belsize Village and England's Lane provide a welcoming community atmosphere just a short walk away, with Primrose Hill and Hampstead Heath nearby. With multiple underground stations within walking distance, Mayfair and Canary Wharf are easily accessible.

BUT of course, the best thing about this area is (you guessed it) having my mum 20 metres away!

For more information on this fabulous 2,310 sq ft, 3 bed, 2 bath flat, (and potentially an introduction to my mother!), watch the video tour below and contact me – Michael McHale.

VIDEO TOUR

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Helford Passage, Cornwall

Mawnan Smith 1.5 miles, Falmouth 7 miles, Truro 15 miles, Newquay Airport 33 miles

Exquisite house in world class setting above the Helford River with gardens by Chelsea Award winner and wonderful views over the river and out to the sea. 5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, a wonderful open plan living/kitchen/dining area and further study and snug.
EPC D. Council Tax Band G.

Guide £3.5m

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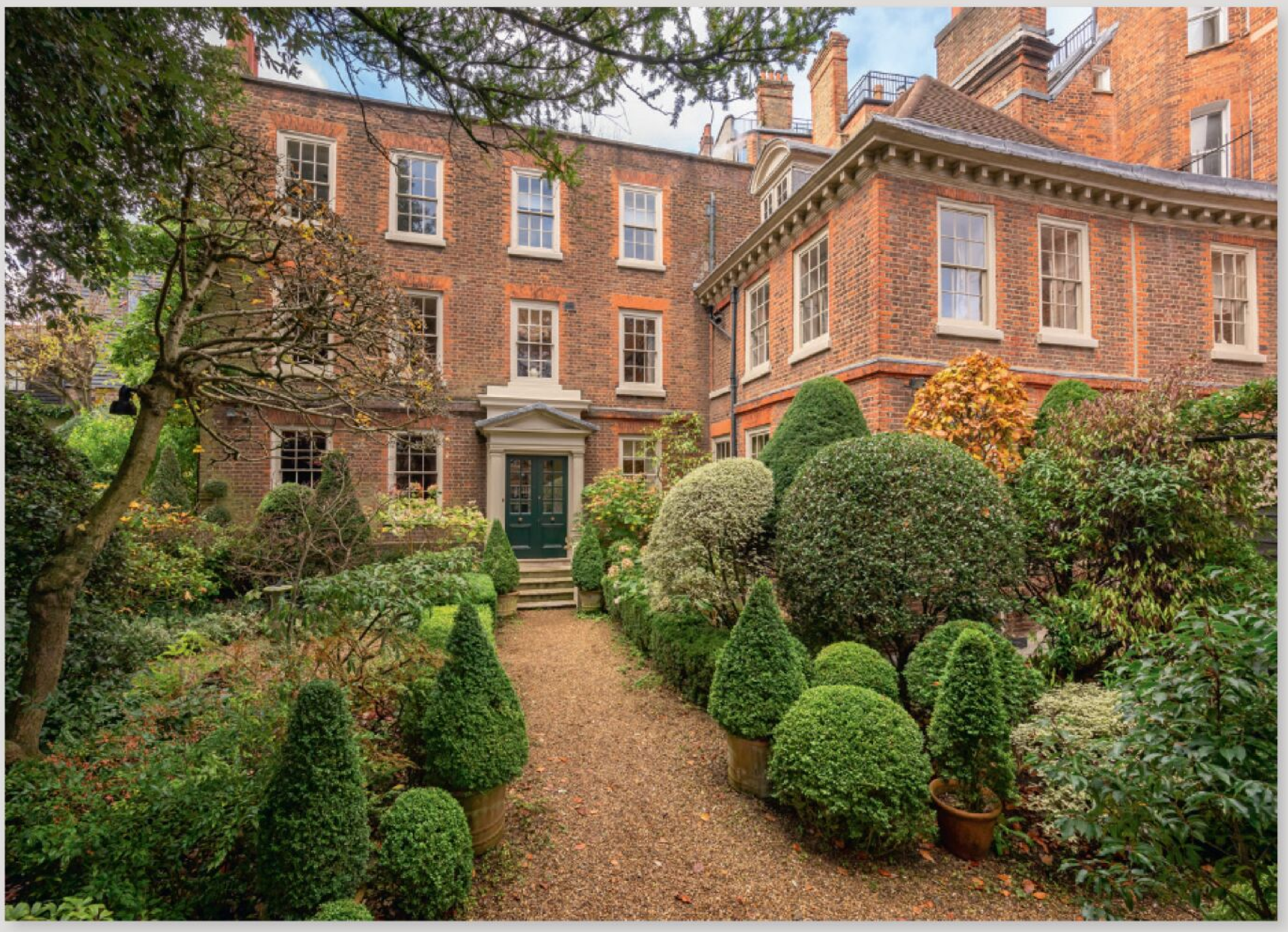
MONKEY ISLAND ESTATE, BERKSHIRE, ENGLAND



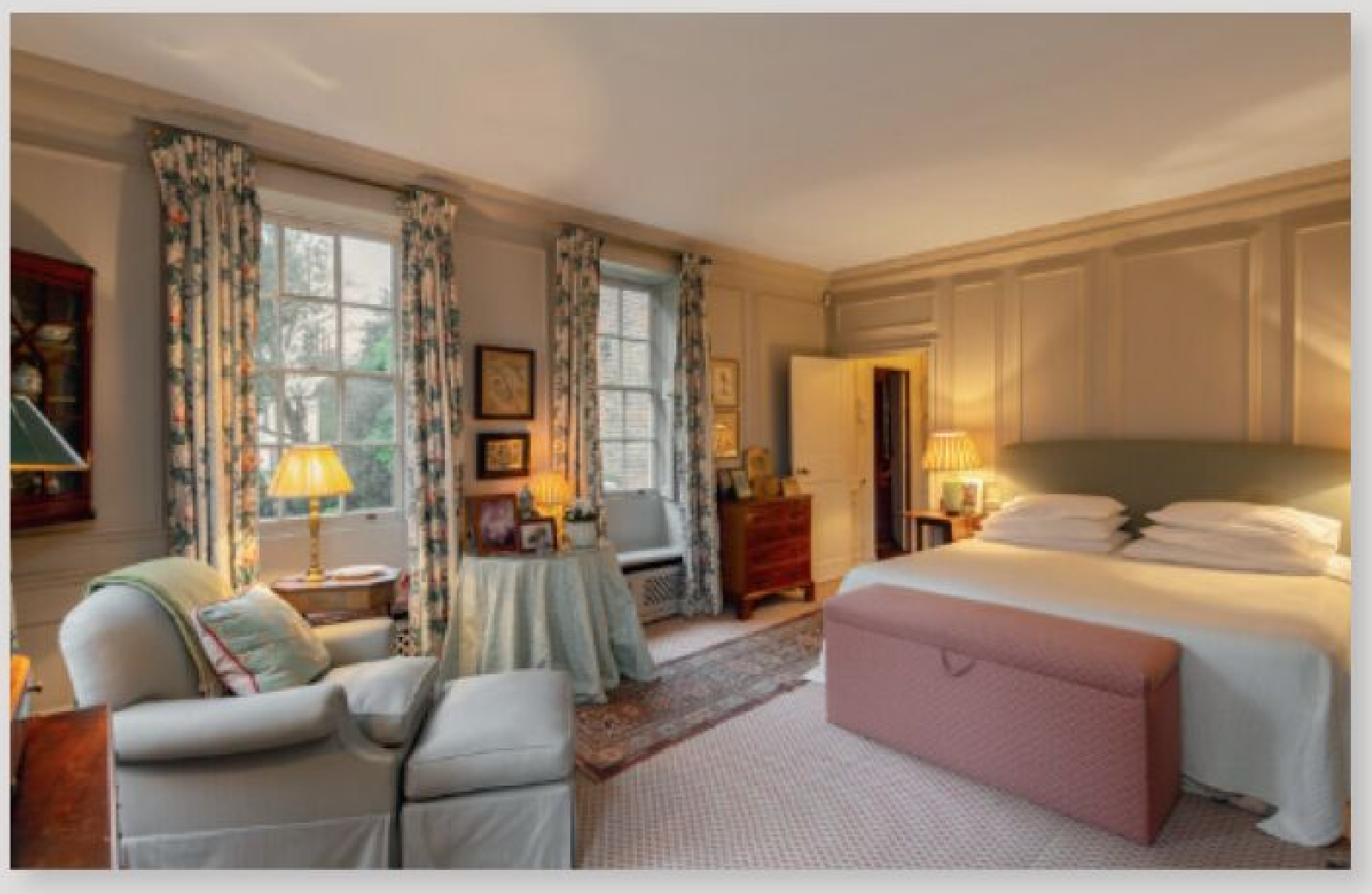
HAMPSTEAD VILLAGE

NW3

A magnificent Queen Anne house, listed grade II*, in an elevated position set in exceptional walled gardens within the heart of Hampstead Village.

ACCOMMODATION & AMENITIES

Reception Hall | Drawing Room | Dining Room | Kitchen/Breakfast Room | Parlour/Morning Room | Office | Guest Cloakroom | First Floor Reception Room/Library | Snug | Principle Bedroom With Ensuite Dressing Room And Toilet | Main Bathroom And Second Dressing Room 4 Further Bedrooms (1 En Suite) | Family Bathroom | Self Contained Guest/Staff Flat Comprising Double Bedroom | Bathroom | Kitchette | Living Room/Games Room | Utility Room | Wine Cellar | Potting Shed | Garden Gazebo | Extensive Gardens | Secluded Patio Areas Ornamental Pond | Double Garage



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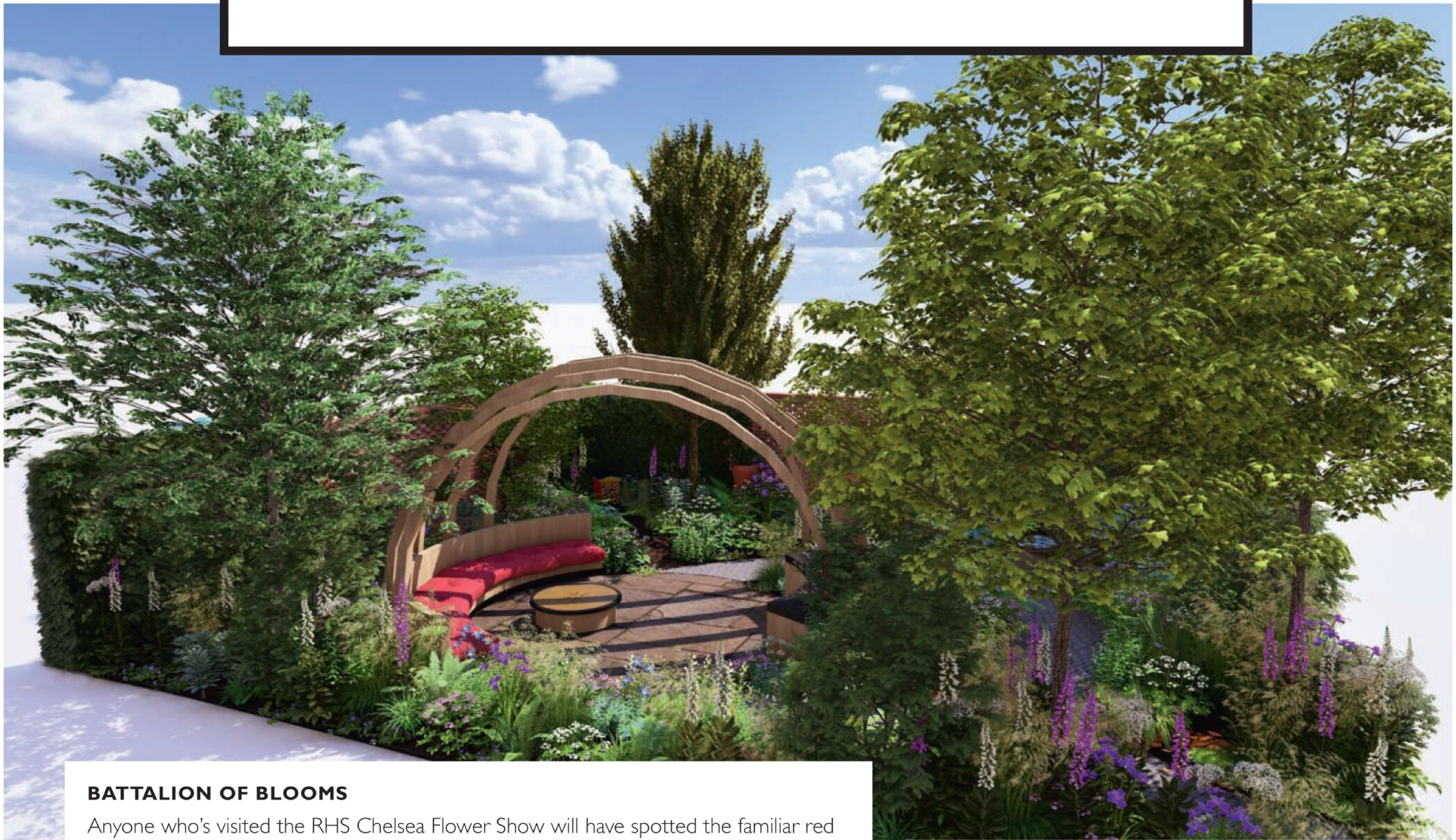
NOTEBOOK

Hot properties, expert buying advice, and a must-see garden at this year's Chelsea Flower Show



BATTALION OF BLOOMS

Anyone who's visited the RHS Chelsea Flower Show will have spotted the familiar red coats of the Chelsea Pensioners, the retired soldiers who live on-site. This year, the famous residents will be more than spectators – they've created a show garden of their own, in collaboration with the designer Dave Green. It is supported by London Square – this will be the property developer's third year sponsoring a garden, and it promises to be one of the most interesting projects yet. The design will be inspired by the Chelsea Pensioners' stories and history, juxtaposing the ceremonial and everyday aspects of their lives. Vibrant planting will stand sentinel around the perimeter, shielding a more private central area that's surrounded by trees. After the flower show, the garden will be relocated within the Royal Hospital Chelsea grounds, providing a lasting space for the pensioners, their families, and non-resident veterans to enjoy. This initiative will also launch garden workshops for veterans in the wider community.

The RHS Chelsea Flower Show runs from 20 to 24 May. For more details, visit www.rhs.org.uk

Garden image: DAVE GREEN GARDENS Photograph: ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA

HIDDEN OPPORTUNITIES

Finding your dream property can often be a huge challenge, from unearthing the right house to navigating the invariably complex and stressful process of securing it. Engaging an experienced buying agent can be a tremendous help, particularly when it comes to sourcing a high-end property, as many opportunities never come on to the open market. As a former equity partner in Strutt & Parker, Tim Page-Ratcliff has over 40 years' experience in buying and selling some of the smartest addresses in the south east, and can provide expert advice on everything to do with property.

For more information, call 07592 107524 or visit tprpropertysolutions.co.uk

A PROVENÇAL PARADISE

Occupying a beautiful spot just outside Cannes, Domaine de La Sylviane is a bucolic estate steeped in history and Provençal charm, conveniently located just 20 minutes from Nice International Airport. Originally built as a monastery, it's notable for the deep sense of peace that pervades the property. The 25 acres of land were once farmed by the resident monks, and this agricultural legacy still lives on in the productive olive groves and fields that surround the house. During World War II, it was used by the French Resistance, and sheltered escaped prisoners of war; latterly, it was occupied by Le Comte du Boisrouvray, a cousin of Prince Rainer of Monaco, before being acquired by the current owners. The main residence, known as The Manor, has six bedrooms, with plenty of space for entertaining. There are also three additional dwellings located across the property, as well as separate staff accommodation, a heated outdoor pool and a tennis court.

For more information, contact Philip Weiser of Carlton Group on 00 33 614 341 314 or email philip@carlton-group.com

MAGNUM OPUS

Spanning eight new buildings and 14 renovated Victorian railway arches, Bankside Yards is a new mixed-use development in the heart of London's South Bank. At 50 storeys, Opus is the development's first tower and will be the tallest new-build residential structure in central London. The 249 apartments have been designed with sustainability in mind, with an innovative heating and cooling network that balances energy across the development and will significantly reduce energy consumption. There are four floors of amenities for residents, including a bouldering wall, a padel court and a podcast studio, and a restaurant, bar and terrace on the 23rd floor that offers panoramic views of the city. Apartments from £760,000.

For more information, call Native Land on 020 7998 1888 or visit opus-london.com

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Magical Mauritius

Whether you are dreaming of a beachfront family villa or an eco-friendly retirement apartment with a beautiful lagoon view, *DIANE WATKINS – Property Consult* is the *real estate authority in Mauritius* you can trust with every detail

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE, Diane Watkins and Sophie Lamusse; the site of Harmonie Beach & Golf Estate; Harmonie Golf Villa concept with views of Le Morne; tropical beach lifestyle

How often have you holidayed somewhere so stunning that you considered buying a property, only to dismiss the desire as an impossible challenge for an 'outsider'? If you are drawn to the lush Indian Ocean island environment of mountains, lagoon and beach in Mauritius, look no further than DIANE WATKINS – Property Consult. The eponymous founder of the boutique agency and her daughter Sophie Lamusse offer such a personal touch with their local knowledge and market perspective, steering you through the process of purchasing property across all areas of the island, that you will likely end up as lifelong family friends. Their bespoke approach to renting, selling and acquisition is founded on more than 30 years of experience and serviced by a multinational team, whose aim is to ensure clients find their sought-after idyllic lifestyle down to the last detail.

Thanks to their connections, Diane and Sophie are well placed to help with purchases of highly in-demand villas on the eco-friendly Harmonie Golf & Beach Estate, located on the outskirts of Tamarin in the Black River district. Here, off-plan residences, to be built according to the principles of bioclimatic architecture, are available to foreign investors with the added attraction of a Mauritian residency permit granted on purchase. Three villa concepts heighten the sense of place, according to the orientation of the plot. This prime west coast location has the best of both worlds: access to the hilly Black River Gorges National Park for hiking and bird watching, and to the tropical beachfront with sweeping views of the ocean.

Luxury, once defined as 'opulence', is today more about 'space', a commodity the Harmonie Golf & Beach Estate serves up with serenity, with its 30 per cent or less build-to-area commitment. The 18-hole Beachcomber course is already underway, landscaped to allow players to appreciate the raw beauty of the setting. With privileged access to beach, golf and five-star Beachcomber hotels, the Harmonie Golf Villas represent the quality that is the hallmark of Diane Watkins's thoughtfully curated property portfolio.

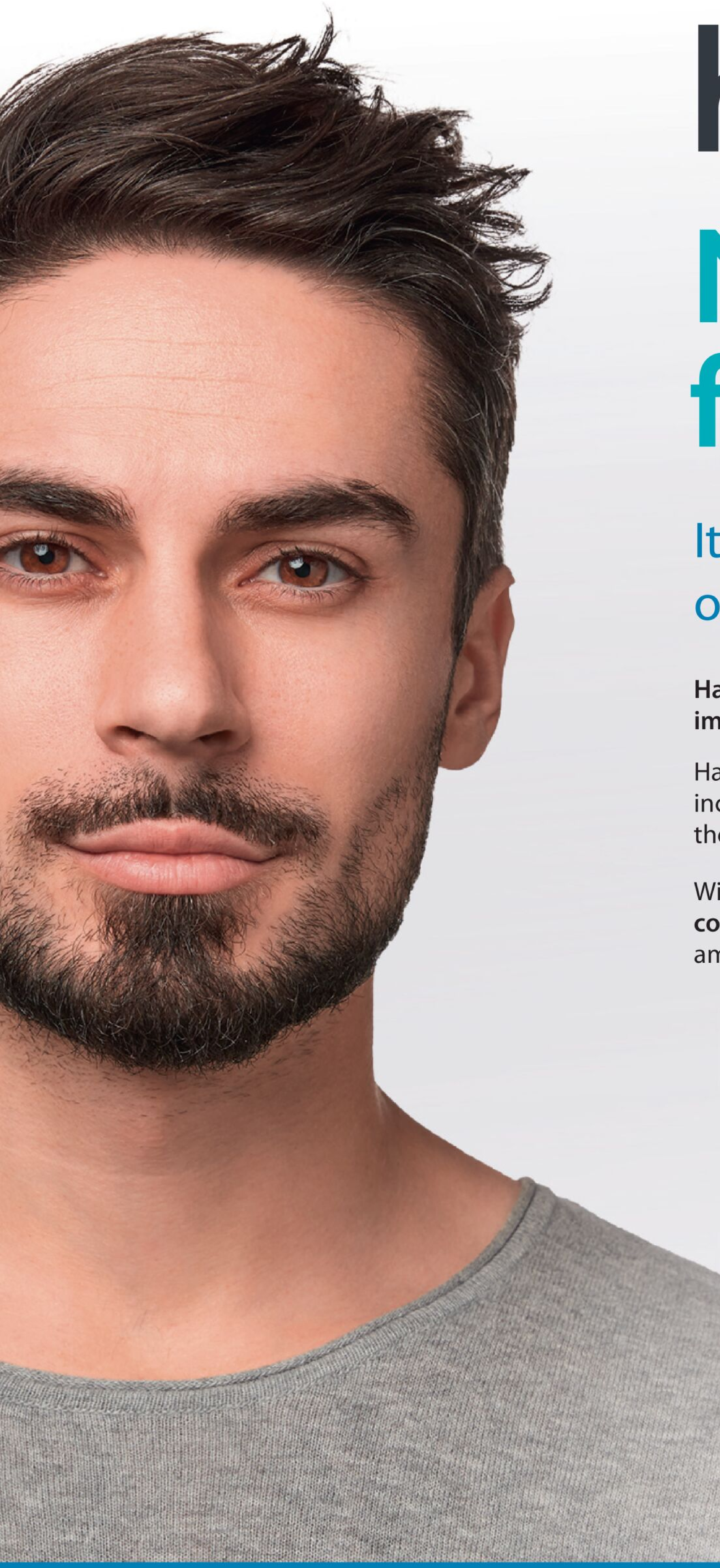
Propertyconsult.mu *@diane_watkins_property_consult*

The eternal appeal of the smoking jacket goes beyond private members' clubs or a Mayfair jazz bar. Allow Ben Affleck to demonstrate how plush tailoring can take you from day to night to... darts at sunrise.

Jacket, shirt and trousers by **Tom Ford.** Pocket square by **Henry Poole & Co.**

PHOTOGRAPH BY **GREGORY HARRIS**

STYLING, GEORGE CORTINA.



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